

The Highland Council
Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee
17 August 2016

Agenda Item	9
Report No	PDI 43/16

Highland Wide Local Development Plan – Post Main Issues Report Interim Position
Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

Summary

This report provides feedback to Members on the comments received during the Main Issues Report (MIR) consultation for the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), and sets out the recommended position on issues raised for approval. Committee is asked to approve this as the Council position to inform the future stages of the review of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, the timescales for which are set out in a separate item relating to the Development Plans Newsletter to be considered at this Committee meeting.

1. Background

- 1.1 Members will note that the Main Issues Report (MIR) marked the first formal stage in the review of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) adopted in 2012. The MIR proposed that the new HwLDP became a policy only plan leaving the Area Local Development Plans to focus on location specific aspects of the Development Plan.
- 1.2 The MIR involved comprehensive analysis of policies set out in the current HwLDP, and whilst it did not comprise a draft replacement plan it reported on the main issues for the Highland area. The MIR also provided options for dealing with each main issue, including the Council's preferred option. These preferences were the initial positions and are not fixed.
- 1.3 This report provides feedback to Members on the comments received during the MIR consultation for the HwLDP, and seeks their approval for the recommended Council position on issues raised. Committee is asked to approve this interim position for the next stages in reviewing the HwLDP.
- 1.4 As set out in the updated Development Plan Scheme, which is covered in a separate item of this committee meeting, the intention is to ensure that two remaining Area Local Development Plans for Caithness & Sutherland and West Highland and Islands are taken to an advanced stage before we recommence work on the HwLDP review. As a consequence, the emerging Area Local Development Plans will need to contain a limited number of planning policies covering issues such as Town Centre First and Growing Settlements until they are covered through the HwLDP review. Similarly, Area Local Development Plans will also be based on Housing Supply Targets identified in the latest 2015 Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) that was prepared in support of the HwLDP review. Through the process of

preparing these Area LDPs, there is an opportunity to tailor these figures to reflect local circumstances and growth projections.

2. Consultation on the Main Issues Report

- 2.1 Following approval by the August 2015 Committee, the HwLDP MIR was subject to full public consultation, which took place over a 18 week period from 25 September 2015 to 29 January 2016, and attracted over 120 responses, of which almost 90% were received online via the Council's online consultation portal consult.highland.gov.uk. As well as making the MIR available online, the Council undertook nine drop-in consultation events across a wide geographical area. The intended 12 week consultation period was extended by an additional 6 weeks to allow for newly formed Community Councils and all associated Members to have sufficient time to consider the MIR and provide comments.

3. Feedback Received and Recommended Interim Position

- 3.1 **Appendix 1** provides a summary of the comments received to the questions posed within the MIR, together with Officers' recommended interim position on the issues raised for approval. A strong degree of support was received to progress the majority of the Council's preferred approaches set out in the MIR. The comments received will inform future stages of reviewing the HwLDP which will be subject to further committee approval for public consultation ahead of examination and adoption.
- 3.2 Whilst the recommendations propose for the timescales for the HwLDP review to be amended, it should be noted that the Housing Need and Demand Assessment that has been prepared to support the emerging HwLDP review remains valid as evidence to support other Local Development Plans under preparation for Caithness & Sutherland and West Highland and Islands.

4. Implications

- 4.1 **Resource**
Resources to prepare the Local Development Plan are available from the Development and Infrastructure Service budget, albeit that further work on the HwLDP is not intended to re-commence until post adoption of all Area Local Development Plans.
- 4.2 **Equality and Climate Change/Carbon Clever**
Equalities Impact Assessment screening was undertaken for the MIR and there are no obvious Climate Change/Carbon Clever implications.
- 4.3 **Legal and Risk**
There are no known legal implications arising from this report.
- 4.4 **Rural**
The MIR addresses a range of development-related rural issues.

- 4.5 Gaelic
All headings in the MIR are provided in Gaelic.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to:

- note and review the comments received to the HwLDP MIR; and
- agree the recommended interim position set out in **Appendix 1** which will inform the future stages of reviewing the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 29 July 2016

Authors: Scott Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
Peter Wheelan, Planner

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 HwLDP MIR Consultation Feedback and Interim Position

Appendix 1: Summary of Comments on HwLDP Main Issues Report and Recommended Council Interim Position

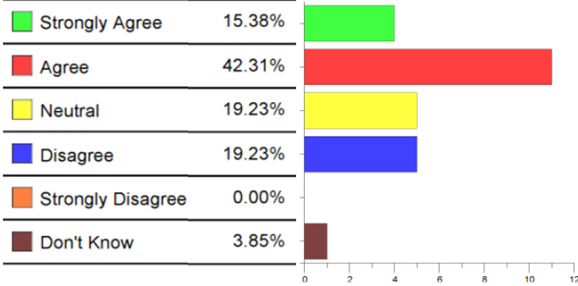
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Preamble													
<p>This report provided a high level summary of the pertinent points raised in the feedback received to the HwLDP MIR consultation. It does not attempt to summarise and address every comment received. All verbatim comments received are available to view on the consultation portal at consult.highland.gov.uk via the HwLDP2 MIR closed consultation document or by selecting the 'Who Said What?' tab and searching by consultee or agent.</p>													
1a) The Vision													
<p>Q1a) Do you agree with the preferred vision and the idea of structuring the replacement Plan around the four themes?</p> <p>58 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="color: green;">Strongly Agree</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6.90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: red;">Agree</td> <td style="text-align: right;">70.69%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: yellow;">Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10.34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: blue;">Disagree</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10.34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: orange;">Strongly Disagree</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: brown;">Don't Know</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.72%</td> </tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	6.90%	Agree	70.69%	Neutral	10.34%	Disagree	10.34%	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	Don't Know	1.72%
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<p>Officer summary: The vast majority of respondees supported the preferred approach. General agreement reached to structuring the plan around the four themes and support expressed for stronger partnership working with the CPP members, communities and the development industry. Support also expressed for the overarching/contextual structure and content of the whole document.</p> <p>Some Community Councils and other respondees raised limited concerns with the vision, stating that it could do more to support and grow rural communities, tackling issues including access to land for development, job creation and access to services.</p>	<p>Interim position: Proceed with preferred approach with minor wording amendments.</p> <p>The vision is designed to reflect sustainable growth in both urban and rural locations, supporting growth where people want to live. There is no urban or rural differentiation made within the vision.</p>												
1b) The Strategy													
<p>Q1b i) Do you agree with the preferred spatial strategy? Is anything missing?</p> <p>44 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="color: green;">Strongly Agree</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2.22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: red;">Agree</td> <td style="text-align: right;">40.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: yellow;">Neutral</td> <td style="text-align: right;">24.44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: blue;">Disagree</td> <td style="text-align: right;">17.78%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: orange;">Strongly Disagree</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15.56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: brown;">Don't Know</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.00%</td> </tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	2.22%	Agree	40.00%	Neutral	24.44%	Disagree	17.78%	Strongly Disagree	15.56%	Don't Know	0.00%
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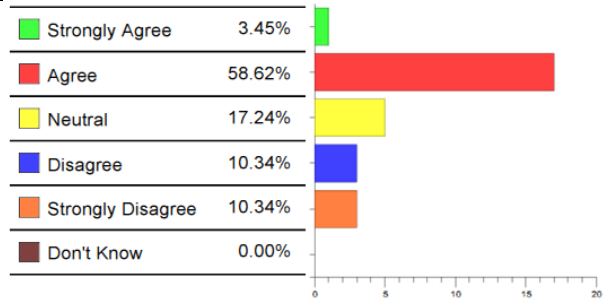
<p>Officer summary: General support expressed for the Spatial Strategy Map, but some calls for further additions or amendments relating to: transport infrastructure; Fragile Areas and Wider Countryside; addition of natural heritage designations; and growth areas.</p> <p>There were wide ranging comments on the housing supply targets and the corresponding Housing Need and Demand Assessment. There were some requests for more information on how our housing figures were calculated.</p>	<p>Interim position: We will consider suggestions made and update the strategy map accordingly.</p> <p>The Housing Need and Demand Assessment prepared to support the MIR provides the latest and most up to date position on housing requirements in Highland and will therefore be used as the basis for all Local Development Plans currently under preparation. These plans will clearly describe how housing supply targets and growth scenarios have been calculated.</p>												
<p>Online Mapping Tool Q1b ii) <i>Do you agree with the concept of an online mapping tool?</i></p> <p>34 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>2.86%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>51.43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>34.29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>2.86%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>5.71%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>2.86%</td> </tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	2.86%	Agree	51.43%	Neutral	34.29%	Disagree	2.86%	Strongly Disagree	5.71%	Don't Know	2.86%
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<p>Officer summary: Respondents acknowledged that this would be a useful resource. Concerns were raised with cost, keeping data up to date, potential usability and accessibility problems in rural areas not well served by broadband. Some Community Councils noted that this mapping resource would not replace the need for site visits and local knowledge.</p>	<p>Interim position: Resources permitting, we intend to proceed with the preparation of an online mapping tool.</p>												
2a) Development Hierarchy													
<p>Q2a) <i>Do you agree with our preferred approach? Does it strike the right balance between promoting development opportunities whilst protecting important assets across Highland?</i></p> <p>36 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>5.56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>52.78%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>25.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>8.33%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>5.56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>2.78%</td> </tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	5.56%	Agree	52.78%	Neutral	25.00%	Disagree	8.33%	Strongly Disagree	5.56%	Don't Know	2.78%
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<p>Officer summary: Overall strong support was received, specifically for limiting planning policy intervention for rural areas and directing the majority of growth to locations better served in terms of infrastructure.</p> <p>Some Community Councils queried why the Development Plan continuously supports certain allocated sites and Settlement Development</p>	<p>Interim position: Proceed with preferred approach with minor amendments.</p> <p>Site reallocations are a case by case issue worthy of examination at the local area level, rather than through HwLDP policy. We will only have</p>												

<p>Areas (SDAs) which have had limited growth for several years. Other Community Councils stated that a relaxed approach to housing in Fragile Areas may lead towards negative environmental impacts.</p>	<p>SDAs for areas experiencing the most development pressure, with Growing Settlements and Wider Countryside development policies providing a balanced policy approach. The effectiveness of this will be monitored through housing completion rates.</p>														
2b) Enhancing the City and Town Centres															
<p>Q2b i) <i>Do you agree with the preferred approach for town centres?</i></p> <p>36 multiple choice responses received.</p>	 <table border="1" data-bbox="821 488 1401 772"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>15.38%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>42.31%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>19.23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>19.23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>3.85%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly Agree	15.38%	Agree	42.31%	Neutral	19.23%	Disagree	19.23%	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	Don't Know	3.85%
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<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>Overall a strong level of support was expressed for the Town Centres First policy. This was seen to be broadly in line with Scottish Planning Policy and the degree of flexibility in the suggested policy wording was welcomed to reflect the availability of sites on the ground. Other points raised related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting a threshold of what constitutes ‘significant footfall’ development; - The inclusion of Local Centres within the policy; - Detailing town centre impact assessment requirements for public buildings and office developments; and - Additional protection for community and cultural facilities from changes in land use. <p>Mixed responses were received for conversion of town centre buildings to residential use. Support was received for bringing vacant and redundant buildings back to use where this generates historic environment benefits. Others considered that the loss of retail and office space should only be supported in exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>Support noted and our intention would be to maintain the preferred approach with the inclusion of modifications based upon the comments received. The variability in scale of what developments constitute ‘significant footfall’ will be carefully considered. There is merit in having a clear list of Town Centres with sensitivity thresholds.</p> <p>The preferred approach will be modified to include a presumption in favour of the retention of retail or active frontages at the ground level on core shopping streets.</p>														
Town Centre First Policy Land Uses															
<p>Q2b ii) <i>What do you think about the list of uses this policy should apply to?</i></p>															
<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>The main suggested addition was the inclusion of tourism attractions and associated services, with the acknowledgement that other locations maybe suitable where attractions require locations which utilise natural or built features.</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>We propose to incorporate tourism uses within the list of significant footfall generating uses with the retention of the requirement to take a flexible and realistic approach when undertaking sequential site assessments.</p>														

2c) Deciding How Settlements Can Grow

Q2c i) *Are you supportive of our balanced approach to directing development through a combination of SDAs and Growing Settlements?*

29 multiple choice responses received.



Officer summary:
Responses strongly favoured the preferred approach with encouragement given for development in appropriate locations which minimises environmental impacts and maximises active travel and sustainable public transport options. Respondees however noted the need to consider how the Growing Settlements policy would apply in the context of Fragile Areas.

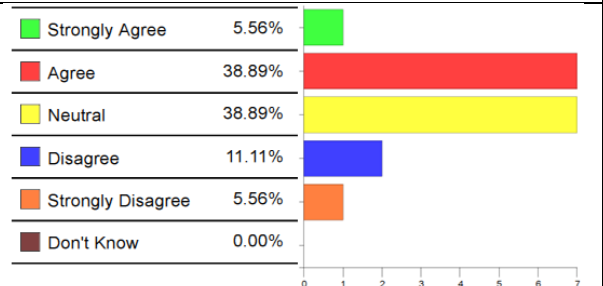
The collective views of Community Councils were generally unsupportive. Although some favoured the preferred option, noting that a simplified process would speed up development if everyone worked with the same assessment criteria, the majority thought that the policy would be too prescriptive, favouring having more bespoke local policies. This alternative was seen as empowering local communities.

Interim position:
We welcome the strong support received and intend to proceed with the Preferred Approach. We need to consider how this policy will address single house developments close to, but out with, Growing Settlements in Fragile Areas.

The preferred approach, which incorporates working with local communities to identify distinctive place making priorities for Growing Settlements, provides an effective balanced policy approach for guiding development. The proposed level of detail is considered to be appropriate and not overly prescriptive to ensure that SDAs and Growing Settlements remain preferable locations for the majority of development.

Preferred Growing Settlement Policy Wording
Q2c ii) *Do you agree with the preferred Growing Settlements policy wording?*

18 multiple choice responses received.



Officer summary:
Responses generally favoured the preferred policy wording with limited concerns raised relating to:

- Applying an overly strict interpretation of restricting developments to those which 'round off' or 'consolidate Growing Settlements' which could inadvertently limit growth.
- The identification of public viewpoints/vistas and questioned if these should be mapped.

Interim position:
We propose to bring forward the propose policy wording unaltered.

The inclusion of the active travel distance criteria should suffice to allow for appropriate settlement growth.

The identification of locally important views can be set out in bespoke Growing Settlement 'placemaking priorities'.

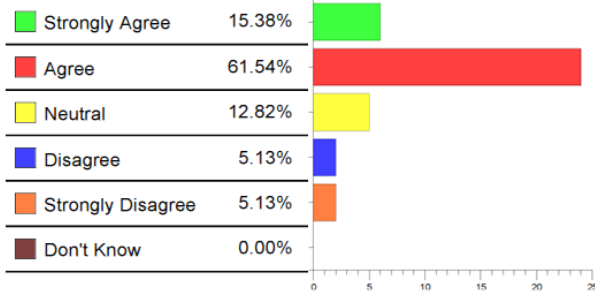
<p>- Avoidance of adverse impacts on heritage designations / Wild Land and prevent net loss of land important to biodiversity.</p>	<p>The preferred policy wording protects locally important heritage features, including those protected for their biodiversity value. It is therefore implicit that impacts on nationally or internationally important heritage interests would be adequately assessed.</p>														
2d) Housing In The Countryside															
<p>Q2d i) <i>Do you agree with our preferred approach to housing in the countryside?</i></p> <p>41 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>7.32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>41.46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>17.07%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>21.95%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>12.20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly Agree	7.32%	Agree	41.46%	Neutral	17.07%	Disagree	21.95%	Strongly Disagree	12.20%	Don't Know	0.00%
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<p>Officer summary: General support for our approach to Housing in the Countryside, however the following concerns were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The removal of an exception for self catering accommodation was seen to be detrimental for rural businesses and without stringent justification. -Constraints on rural housing were seen to be excessive causing inadequate opportunities for local people to self build. -Some changes to Hinterland/Fragile boundaries were sought by certain Community Councils. -Clustered housing was seen to be inappropriate for rural crofting areas. 	<p>Interim position: Proceed with preferred approach with minor amendments, and more stringent assessment criteria for siting and design included in the revised Housing in the Countryside Siting and Design Supplementary Guidance (SG).</p> <p>We will undertake further analysis of the self catering market and consider if such proposals should be treated any differently to housing proposals within the Hinterland.</p> <p>The preferred approach attempts to address this through Fragile Areas distinction and changes outlines in Q2dii and Q2diii.</p> <p>These changes will be considered for the next stage in plan preparation.</p> <p>Our preferred approach allows for a dispersed crofting pattern of development in Fragile Areas. Croft houses in the Wider Countryside will be supported through an exemption to the housing group assessment detailed in the revised Housing in the Countryside Siting and Design SG.</p>														
<p>Requirement for Legal Agreements for Housing in the Hinterland Q2d ii) <i>Do you agree that legal agreements should be required for housing in the Hinterland justified by an operational need, including croft houses?</i></p> <p>32 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>15.63%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>37.50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>21.88%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>9.38%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>15.63%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly Agree	15.63%	Agree	37.50%	Neutral	21.88%	Disagree	9.38%	Strongly Disagree	15.63%	Don't Know	0.00%
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<p>Officer summary: Although there is general support for the use of legal agreements in the Hinterland Area, several concerns were raised in relation to two recent planning appeals which concluded that the use of legal agreements to tie a new house to the operational land that justifies the house conflicts with national policy. Concerns related to the ability to access finance and a requirement to differentiate between croft houses and general housing proposal.</p>	<p>Interim position: Despite a strong degree of support expressed for the continued use of legal agreements, as agreed by the May 2016 Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee, THC will no longer use such agreements. Proposals are instead to be assessed based on the criteria set out within the above committee report in addition to extant criteria set out in the Housing in the Countryside Siting and Design SG, which will be revised in due course.</p>														
<p>Re-populating our Most Fragile Areas Q2d iii) <i>Do you agree with our policy support to encourage re-populating our most Fragile Areas?</i></p> <p>34 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>8.82%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>55.88%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>20.59%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>11.76%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>2.94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly Agree	8.82%	Agree	55.88%	Neutral	20.59%	Disagree	11.76%	Strongly Disagree	2.94%	Don't Know	0.00%
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<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>A strong level of support was shown for the repopulation of rural areas through a relaxed approach to housing development. The following concerns were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Second home ownership was seen to be a major constraint to affordable housing in Fragile Areas. There was some concern about the policy being primarily used by second homeowners. -Several respondents expressed that growth should be first directed to existing settlements even in Fragile Areas. -Potential impact on natural heritage features and the environment. 	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>We intend to proceed with the preferred approach, taking into account comments received.</p> <p>We will continue to use other mechanisms such as reducing the affordable housing contribution threshold and by working in partnership with organisations, such as the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust, we will encourage the delivery of more affordable housing in Fragile Areas.</p> <p>A balanced policy approach is required which directs most growth towards existing settlements and sustains Fragile Area populations. We intend to progress Growing Settlement and SDA policies which protect the setting of settlements from single house sites.</p> <p>Natural heritage features will remain safeguarded through development assessment criteria to be set out within the revised Housing in the Countryside Siting and Design SG.</p>														

2e) Supporting Rural and Fragile Areas

Q2e i) *Do you agree with our preferred approach to supporting rural and Fragile Areas?*

39 multiple choice responses received.



Officer summary:

A strong level of agreement was reached for the preferred approach with this generally seen as being sustainable and fair.

Some Community Councils thought economic development was being prioritised over safeguarding the quality of the natural environment. The lack of, or inadequate timely delivery of, associated infrastructure was also a concern.

Other Community Councils thought the proposals were unrepresentative of rural and Fragile Area’s economic and social needs with these areas struggling to sustain themselves. Priorities for attracting development included: improved employment opportunities; affordable homes for local people; maintaining roads and services; education facilities; and preservation of culture / traditional industries.

Interim position:

We intend to prepare policy wording which builds upon the preferred approach and feedback received.

We intend that the policy wording clearly sets out the requirement to carefully consider siting, design, landscape, visual impacts and existing patterns of development. Cumulative infrastructure requirements are predicted to be manageable given that significant footfall generating uses are being directed towards SDAs and Growing Settlements.

We intend for the proposed policy to support development that generates rural employment. Single house sites in Fragile Areas are to receive policy support and we are exploring the merits of more developer contributions towards the delivery of more affordable housing. The Spatial Strategy highlights road and broadband service improvements and the policy wording would favour development of traditional industries.

Rural Economic Development Policy Additions

Q2e ii) *Are there any other features that a Rural Economic Development policy should include?*

Officer summary:

Suggested policy additions included:

- Support for rural farm shops / cafes which benefit from a unique selling point directly related to their location and setting, or local produce.
- Limit holiday homes by introducing housing occupancy constraints or higher second home taxes.
- Support for privately led development that have community benefits.

Interim position:

We intend for the policy to support rural developments which are clearly reliant upon a unique selling point relating to local produce or a rural setting, character / landscape feature. This would be set out as an exception to the Town Centres First Policy.

Occupancy restrictions are not supported by the Scottish Government and local taxation is a matter not governed through the Development Plan.

Community benefits are of a voluntary nature and do not affect the planning merits of a

<p>- Community Land Scotland sought to ensure long term potential for new settlements and considerable growth of Fragile Areas.</p>	<p>particular development.</p> <p>New settlements require to be set out within Development Plan allocations to fully consider potential environmental affects and infrastructure requirements.</p>
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3a) Design Requirements

<p>Q3a) <i>Do you agree with the preferred approach to raising the importance of placemaking, sustainable design and efficient travel for all development?...Is anything missing?</i></p> <p>33 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>18.18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>63.64%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>12.12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>3.03%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>3.03%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	18.18%	Agree	63.64%	Neutral	12.12%	Disagree	3.03%	Strongly Disagree	3.03%	Don't Know	0.00%
Strongly Agree	18.18%												
Agree	63.64%												
Neutral	12.12%												
Disagree	3.03%												
Strongly Disagree	3.03%												
Don't Know	0.00%												

<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>Significant support for the preferred approach to have one consolidated policy on Design Requirements. Concerns expressed for viability of reducing car dependency in areas poorly served by public transport. We are encouraged to avoid a “one size fits all” approach that is overly prescriptive. Widespread approval for raising standards of placemaking and design, including suggested measures to address climate change, flood alleviation, active travel, open space and biodiversity.</p> <p>Several Community Councils agreed with the preferred approach albeit many cautioned against ignoring transport challenges in areas poorly served by public transport. The importance of good design was highlighted, including greater diversity of house types and sensitivity to local context. Encouragement also given to measures to reduce car dependency, increase provision of community facilities and improve maintenance/stewardship of the public realm.</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>We intend to proceed with the preferred approach and in drafting new policy and any associated SG we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider how much emphasis should be placed on active travel and reduced car dependency in areas poorly served by public transport. - Consider suggestions made for raising standards of placemaking and design.
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3b) Sustainable Travel

<p>Q3b) <i>Do you agree with our preferred approach to delivering efficient travel for Highland?...Is anything missing?</i></p> <p>31 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>64.52%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>12.90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>22.58%</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	64.52%	No	12.90%	Don't Know	22.58%
Yes	64.52%						
No	12.90%						
Don't Know	22.58%						

<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>Overall, a strong level of support was expressed for the preferred approach to delivering efficient travel although some comments highlighted concerns for a lack of resources to fund</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>We intend to proceed with the preferred approach.</p>
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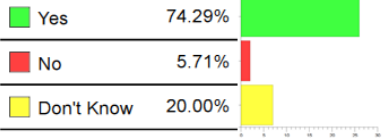
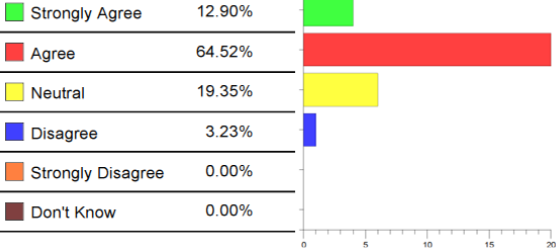
<p>necessary infrastructure. Support was expressed for the positive approach taken for walking, cycling and community transport, rather than being car focused. Other specific comments related to:</p> <p><u>Functional Trips</u>: The inclusion of the Local Transport Strategy (LTS) within the Development Plan being a positive step forward. LTS suggested inclusions were: a city car club, electric car schemes and park and ride facilities. Some Community Councils sought enhanced safety of active travel routes, new targeted routes and improved signage, better integration of different transport modes and enhanced rural services.</p> <p><u>Strategic Transport</u>: Various LTS suggested inclusions such as rail track improvements, airline connections, port facilities and an expand marine network.</p> <p><u>Recreational Routes</u>: LTS to require safe and attractive stopping points and improved mobile phone coverage to increase safety.</p>	<p>We require to work with Transport Planning to progress with the LTS, associated mapping and consultation proceedings. We will consider routes to be set out in the LTS or in area Local Development Plans and Development Briefs.</p> <p>The inclusion or otherwise of such schemes will be considered in the preparation of the LTS.</p> <p>This will be considered in the preparation of the LTS.</p>
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3c) Green Infrastructure

<p>Q3c i) <i>Do you agree with our preferred approach to green infrastructure? Can you suggest any alternatives?</i></p> <p>25 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>16.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>44.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>24.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>8.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>4.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>4.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly Agree	16.00%	Agree	44.00%	Neutral	24.00%	Disagree	8.00%	Strongly Disagree	4.00%	Don't Know	4.00%
Response	Percentage														
Strongly Agree	16.00%														
Agree	44.00%														
Neutral	24.00%														
Disagree	8.00%														
Strongly Disagree	4.00%														
Don't Know	4.00%														

<p>Officer summary: Overall strong level of support for the preferred approach.</p> <p>Scottish Government and Sport Scotland suggested minor policy wording amendments, whilst RSPB Scotland requested more explicit reference to furthering biodiversity.</p> <p>The Scottish Government, SNH and a Community Council expressed concerns about the Greenspace Audit no longer being required. Mapping of green infrastructure at a local scale was seen as assisting to secure developer contributions and appropriate enforcement.</p>	<p>Interim position: Our intention would be to maintain the preferred approach.</p> <p>The points raised by consultees will be considered in drafting policies.</p> <p>The need to maintain a greenspace audit will be carefully considered, however, we consider that sufficient detail will be provided within our emerging area Local Development Plan mapping and site allocations.</p>
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<p>Open Space Provision for all Scales and Types of Development</p> <p>Q3c ii) <i>Should open space provision be required for all scales and types of development? Including single house developments contributing proportionately?</i></p> <p>20 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>60.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>15.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>25.00%</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	60.00%	No	15.00%	Don't Know	25.00%						
Yes	60.00%												
No	15.00%												
Don't Know	25.00%												
<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>Agreement reached that high quality open space is important and that all types and scales of development should generally contribute. Some respondees, including Community Councils suggested that single house developments and particularly first time house developers should be exempt, whilst others thought securing developer contributions for funding open space enhancements off site was appropriate.</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>Support noted for developer contributions to open space on all types of development and it is therefore likely that we will maintain the preferred approach. However, we will continue to explore the options for defining the scales of development to apply a consistent mechanism for delivery.</p>												
<p>4a) Carbon Clever Energy</p>													
<p>Q4a i) <i>Do you agree with our preferred approach for renewable energy?</i></p> <p>38 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>5.26%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>52.63%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>23.68%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>7.89%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>5.26%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>5.26%</td> </tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	5.26%	Agree	52.63%	Neutral	23.68%	Disagree	7.89%	Strongly Disagree	5.26%	Don't Know	5.26%
Strongly Agree	5.26%												
Agree	52.63%												
Neutral	23.68%												
Disagree	7.89%												
Strongly Disagree	5.26%												
Don't Know	5.26%												
<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>Broad support for the Council’s preferred approach but some confusion as to its aims and how it will be applied in practice. Specific comments related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Polarised opinions on whether the new policy’s presumption and criteria should be skewed in favour of socio-economic or environmental effects. - Majority support for a policy that offers explicit support for renewable projects with a degree of community involvement and local socio-economic benefit. Disagreement surrounded the Council’s suggested criterion of “level of community support”. - Disagreement over the Council’s suggested merger of on shore wind with other on shore renewables policy. The majority supported the proposed on/off shore policy split. 	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>The Onshore Wind Energy SG paper presented to this August PDI Committee contains specific recommendations and updated, revised policy advice on the majority of issues raised, at least in so far as they apply to onshore wind energy.</p> <p>The Proposed Plan should contain a neutral presumption, criteria based policy. To comply with Scottish Planning Policy, the Proposed Plan should seek to ensure that the area’s full potential for electricity from renewables is achieved.</p> <p>It should offer positive support for community renewables projects, for example where a project is owned by the community or they have a share in it, where this will bring about socio-economic benefits.</p> <p>Wind energy and other onshore renewable developments should, where appropriate, have differentiated policy criteria. The proposed</p>												

<p>- Polarised opinions on whether community buffer distance should be referenced within the Plan and if so whether it should be a constraint.</p>	<p>on/off shore policy split should be followed through</p> <p>Refer to the Onshore Wind Energy SG paper presented to this August PDI Committee.</p>												
<p>Spatial Framework for Onshore Wind Energy <i>Q4a ii) Do you agree with our preference to include the Spatial Framework for onshore wind energy in the replacement Plan?</i></p> <p>35 multiple choice responses received.</p>	 <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>74.29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>5.71%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>20.00%</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	74.29%	No	5.71%	Don't Know	20.00%						
Yes	74.29%												
No	5.71%												
Don't Know	20.00%												
<p>Officer summary: Q4a ii) No clear majority preference whether Spatial Framework (SF) should be in Plan or SG. Consensus that mapping should be included in policy and it should be as detailed, accurate and up to date as possible. It should also be consistent with Scottish Planning Policy and based on “live” updates of the source information. Several respondents believe the live mapping should reflect renewable developments in the development pipeline as well as completed schemes. One respondent believes the data that underpins the SF misses protected species outwith designated sites. One respondent believes inland lochs should be excluded from the mapping. One respondent believes impacts on views from tourist sites should be included.</p>	<p>Interim position: Q4a ii) As detailed in the Onshore Wind Energy SG paper to this August PDI Committee.</p>												
<p>Highland Renewable Energy Strategy <i>Q4a iii) Which parts of the Highland Renewable Energy Strategy do you consider to remain useful?</i></p>													
<p>Officer summary: Majority stated a preference to abandon Highland Renewable Energy Strategy (HRES) and begin afresh. Some respondents believed that the overarching principles, targets (albeit updated), community project support and/or off shore elements should be retained.</p>	<p>Interim position: The Proposed Plan should contain the underlying principles of a new HRES so that a SG review can occur in the future whether that review concludes that wholesale changes are required or not.</p>												
<p>4b) The Historic and Natural Environment</p>													
<p><i>Q4b) Do you agree with the preferred approach to managing the historic and natural environment, including biodiversity?.....Is anything missing?</i></p> <p>31 multiple choice responses received.</p>	 <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>12.90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>64.52%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>19.35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>3.23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	12.90%	Agree	64.52%	Neutral	19.35%	Disagree	3.23%	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	Don't Know	0.00%
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Neutral	19.35%												
Disagree	3.23%												
Strongly Disagree	0.00%												
Don't Know	0.00%												
<p>Officer summary: General support received for separation of policies into natural environment and historic</p>	<p>Interim position: Our intention would be to maintain the preferred approach.</p>												

<p>environment.</p> <p>Some concerns were raised over the potential for Wild Land to create a barrier to development and socio-economic impacts for Fragile Areas with this needing to be carefully balanced in the new policy to ensure good decision making. Some Community Councils noted that as no guidance is available for Wild Land areas, this risks leaving a policy gap until SNH produce national guidance.</p> <p>Some Community Councils also suggested that refusals based on safeguarding historic or natural environment features should result in these areas becoming "No Go Areas" for any similar developments.</p>	<p>Officers will ensure the new policies afford the appropriate level of safeguarding for features. Other policies in the replacement plan will set out the Council's position on social, economic and other development factors, which will provide the basis for balanced decision making.</p> <p>Each development proposal is assessed on a case-by-case basis and it would not be appropriate for policy to create a blanket ban on development based on previous application outcomes.</p>
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4c) Heat Networks and Waste Strategy

<p>Q4c i) <i>Do you agree with our preferred approach for heat networks?</i></p> <p>22 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>9.09%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>63.64%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>27.27%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>0.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>0.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>0.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	9.09%		Agree	63.64%		Neutral	27.27%		Disagree	0.00%		Strongly Disagree	0.00%		Don't Know	0.00%	
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Disagree	0.00%																		
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Don't Know	0.00%																		

<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>The majority of respondents agreed with our preferred approach for heat networks noting that this is a positive step towards reducing carbon emissions. The remainder indicated 'neutral', with no-one disagreeing with it.</p> <p>Scottish Government are content with the Council's preferred approach and suggested reference to their online advice when developing a strategy and policy for heat.</p> <p>A Community Council considered that the Plan needs to do more to drive increasing energy efficiency and reducing energy use, not just generating more energy. Others believed that the policy needs to be firm, with strong requirements driving connection to heat networks where available and otherwise micro-generation and heat recovery.</p> <p>Homes for Scotland and a housing developer responses urged that, in developing any policy on heat networks and development, the approach takes account of viability and what can</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>The preferred approach for developing the policy remains broadly appropriate. Going forward we need to be mindful of the opportunity to 'drive' consideration of heat opportunities through the planning of new development, whilst acknowledging development viability issues and being aware of technical constraints.</p> <p>The Council is currently working with other cities through the Scottish Cities Alliance on the preparation of draft planning policy and guidance which, in due course, we will be able to consider for inclusion (with or without adaptation) in our own Development Plan. Officers are also working together within the Council to identify potential opportunities for heat networks, for further consideration.</p>
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<p>realistically work in practice as part of a housing development.</p> <p>A renewables company welcome the move to strengthen policy recognition of the urgent need to develop better heat management through a combination of methods. Recommendations included proactive in planning for heat networks in towns by identify sites for heat generation or CHP plants.</p> <p>SEPA thought the policy should require large scale new developments to provide a heat network within the site or connect to any existing local district heating network.</p> <p>Scottish Water is strongly supportive of the renewable potential of heat recovery and Scottish Water Horizons has been working to deploy a heat recovery system which extracts heat from sewer networks to provide heating, cooling and domestic hot water.</p>	
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Waste Management															
<p>Q4c ii) <i>Do you agree with our preferred approach to determining waste management proposals?</i></p> <p>20 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>15.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>35.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>45.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>5.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't Know</td> <td>0.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly Agree	15.00%	Agree	35.00%	Neutral	45.00%	Disagree	0.00%	Strongly Disagree	5.00%	Don't Know	0.00%
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Strongly Agree	15.00%														
Agree	35.00%														
Neutral	45.00%														
Disagree	0.00%														
Strongly Disagree	5.00%														
Don't Know	0.00%														

<p>Officer summary: Half of all respondees supported the preferred approach and comments related to providing more support for waste reduction rather than focusing on addressing residual waste treatment and disposal.</p> <p>SEPA strongly agree with the preferred approach, however, consider that there is a need for specific waste site allocations to specify they type of treatment required.</p>	<p>Interim Position: Whilst every effort should be made to minimise waste generation, there will always be an element of residual waste which requires to be managed. The policy intends to back the outcome of the Council's forthcoming Waste Management Strategy review.</p> <p>As set out in the non-preferred approach in the MIR, we do not wish to be overly prescriptive to ensure sites remain available for a wide range of treatment technologies which advance over time.</p>
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Suggested Amendments to Mapped Waste Sites	
<p>Q4c iii) <i>Are there any amendments needed to the existing mapped waste sites (HwLDP MAP 17 to 20 and Figure 9)?</i></p>	

<p>Officer summary: Highlands and Islands Enterprise raised concerns with the existing allocation of Glen Nevis Business Park being a suitable waste</p>	<p>Interim position: The suitability of this site has been assessed as part of the West Highland Local Development Plan, the MIR for which no longer identifies this</p>
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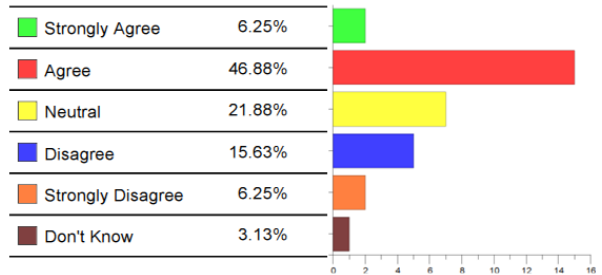
<p>management location.</p> <p>SEPA recommended that THC makes use of 'Our Waste Sites and Capacity Tool' for area Local Development Plans to identify existing waste management sites.</p>	<p>site for waste management purposes.</p> <p>We require to consider the need to identify all existing waste management sites in our emerging area Local Development Plans.</p>												
<p>4d) Minerals</p>													
<p>Q4d i) <i>Do you agree with the preferred approach? Does it go far enough to support the mineral and construction industries?</i></p> <p>20 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Strongly Agree</td><td>0.00%</td></tr> <tr><td>Agree</td><td>45.00%</td></tr> <tr><td>Neutral</td><td>55.00%</td></tr> <tr><td>Disagree</td><td>0.00%</td></tr> <tr><td>Strongly Disagree</td><td>0.00%</td></tr> <tr><td>Don't Know</td><td>0.00%</td></tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	0.00%	Agree	45.00%	Neutral	55.00%	Disagree	0.00%	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	Don't Know	0.00%
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Disagree	0.00%												
Strongly Disagree	0.00%												
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<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>Overall, almost half of responses agreed with the preferred approach and comments related to there being considerable scope for Highlands to increase aggregate exports to England and Europe with mineral sites in rural areas being a stimulus for economic development.</p> <p>Some Community Councils sought sufficient environmental safeguards whilst also supporting mineral industry expansion in suitable locations.</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>Agreement reached and we intend to proceed with the preferred approach. The case for maximising exports from Highland will be considered in the policy wording.</p> <p>Best environmental practice will be promoted in the policy wording to ensure communities remain protected.</p>												
<p>Financial Guarantees for Restoration</p> <p>Q4d ii) <i>Do you agree that financial guarantees should be required for all scales of development requiring restoration?</i></p> <p>16 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Strongly Agree</td><td>31.25%</td></tr> <tr><td>Agree</td><td>31.25%</td></tr> <tr><td>Neutral</td><td>25.00%</td></tr> <tr><td>Disagree</td><td>6.25%</td></tr> <tr><td>Strongly Disagree</td><td>0.00%</td></tr> <tr><td>Don't Know</td><td>6.25%</td></tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	31.25%	Agree	31.25%	Neutral	25.00%	Disagree	6.25%	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	Don't Know	6.25%
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Neutral	25.00%												
Disagree	6.25%												
Strongly Disagree	0.00%												
Don't Know	6.25%												
<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>The consensus was that financial guarantees for restoration should be required for all scales of development. Exemptions for smaller scale quarry operations and borrow pits were suggested where these developments do not incur the same degrees of environmental risks.</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>We intend to proceed with the preferred approach. Exceptions for smaller scale operations will not be pursued in the interests of securing the effective restoration of all mineral sites.</p>												
<p>Annual Monitoring & Site Visit Funding</p> <p>Q4d iii) <i>Given that the planning application fees do not cover the full costs of effective site monitoring, do you agree that site operators should fund annual monitoring reports and associated Council site visits?</i></p> <p>17 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Strongly Agree</td><td>23.53%</td></tr> <tr><td>Agree</td><td>23.53%</td></tr> <tr><td>Neutral</td><td>47.06%</td></tr> <tr><td>Disagree</td><td>5.88%</td></tr> <tr><td>Strongly Disagree</td><td>0.00%</td></tr> <tr><td>Don't Know</td><td>0.00%</td></tr> </table>	Strongly Agree	23.53%	Agree	23.53%	Neutral	47.06%	Disagree	5.88%	Strongly Disagree	0.00%	Don't Know	0.00%
Strongly Agree	23.53%												
Agree	23.53%												
Neutral	47.06%												
Disagree	5.88%												
Strongly Disagree	0.00%												
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<p>Officer summary:</p> <p>The majority of respondees supported the case</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>In light of the Scottish Government's response,</p>												

<p>for site operators to fund annual monitoring reports and associated site visits, however, the Scottish Government referred to the fee Regulations to determine the suitability of developers funding council monitoring site visits. Industry raises concerns related to the additional administration burden and questioned if the additional degree of regulation was necessary.</p>	<p>monitoring site visits shall continue to be funded by the Council, however, developers will be required to prepare annual monitoring reports. With the collapse of the Scottish Coal industry and several sites remaining unrestored, further site restoration safeguards and effective site monitoring is required for all mineral extractive activities.</p>
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5a) Planning Obligations

Q5a i) *Do you agree with the preferred approach to planning obligations?*

32 multiple choice responses received.



Officer summary:
 The majority of respondees supported the preferred approach and generally acknowledged the need for more affordable housing. Community Councils considered that it was reasonable for house builders to contribute to the cost of delivering necessary supporting infrastructure and services. Other comments received were wide ranging and touched upon the following key points:

- A misconception that additional housing, results in additional council tax to fund service and infrastructure delivery and developer contributions are essentially an additional level of local taxation.
- The suggested cumulative approach focuses on small scale developments which usually take place in rural Fragile Areas where development viability is more challenging. There should be scope for certain exemptions and some Community Councils queried if funds raised would be spent locally.
- Major pieces of infrastructure to be clearly set out and mapped.

Interim position:
 We intend to progress with the preferred approach with some minor wording amendments in the policy wording and provide further details on which types of development that will incur planning obligations.

Council tax makes up only a proportion of overall service and infrastructure costs. Future growth must therefore be targeted towards areas which are most cost effective to service and developer contributions are required in locations which do not already benefit from sufficient infrastructure / service provision.

We intend to pursue cumulative affordable housing contributions with variable thresholds and contribution rates to reflect local circumstances with scope for exemptions. Contributions for Affordable Housing would be spent within the local Housing Market Area and encouraged to be spent as locally as possible.

This level of detail is best suited to be provided within our area Local Development Plans, Development Briefs and potentially SG.

Planning Obligations Proposed Policy Wording
 Q5a ii) *Do you have any comments on the proposed Planning Obligations policy wording?*

Officer summary:
 Homes for Scotland requested that consideration

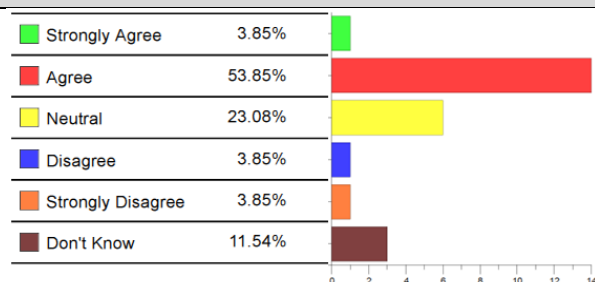
Interim position:
 We will consider the inclusion of similar wording

<p>of development viability is expressly set out within the policy wording.</p> <p>Some Community Councils sought a specified level / rate of contribution per house within the policy.</p> <p>Some Community Councils also highlighted the need for site allocation exceedances to be addressed.</p>	<p>within the policy supporting text.</p> <p>This is dependant on a number of site and area specific factors. Levels of contribution are instead proposed to be set out in SG.</p> <p>We propose that the policy includes a statement that requires Developer Obligations for sites be subject to a 'pause and review' cause to require refreshed technical assessments to inform the need for additional infrastructure / service improvements.</p>
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5b) Water, Flooding and SuDS

Q5b i) *Do you agree with the preferred approach for the water environment?*

26 multiple choice responses received.



Officer summary:

General support expressed for the suggested policy approach, however, the following pertinent points were raised:

-Varying opinions to whether the preference for natural ahead of engineered flood defences should be dropped from policy.

- Socio-economic benefits need to be better balanced with aim of protection of water environment in certain locations (e.g. Nigg) and enforcement of existing policy is more important than review of it.

-General opposition to proposed developer contributions for strategic flood schemes because these schemes are not intended to create development potential and householders are the main beneficiaries, not landowners.

-SEPA oppose loss of reference to cumulative drainage areas and suggest developer funded impact assessment in these areas.

- Varying opinions on who should fund SuDS maintenance.

Interim position:

Proceed with the preferred approach with minor amendments to reflect the comments received.

The preference for natural ahead of engineered flood management solutions should be dropped but the biodiversity benefits and complementarity of natural solutions should be emphasised.

The related SG should be re-visited and its enforcement provisions strengthened.

The concept of developer contributions for strategic flood schemes should be restricted to gifted land transfer not direct financial contributions.

Reference to private drainage "hot spot" areas should be included if SEPA publish mapped areas in time for the publication of the Proposed Plan.

A hierarchy of SuDS maintenance funding should be listed within the revised SG – i.e. full

<p>- Scottish Government believes that no new coastal development should be supported if that development requires new defences. Others through existing coastal development should be exempt from the policy for minor changes.</p> <p>- Limited disagreement with pre-site allocation Flood Risk Assessments because no known development scheme will be in place and therefore difficult for a hydrologist to assess.</p>	<p>specification completion for Scottish Water maintenance as the preferred solution but factored maintenance as a fall back position.</p> <p>New coastal development should still be permissible with new flood defences for water borne uses – e.g. expanded harbours, new marinas etc.</p> <p>Pre-site allocation Flood Risk Assessments should be required but their level of detail should be proportionate to the size, likely impact and known circumstances of the proposal.</p>
<p>Flood Risk and Water Quality Q5b ii) <i>Do you have any other suggestions to reduce the risk of flooding or improve water quality?</i></p>	
<p>Officer summary: Suggestions included:</p> <p>-RSPB believe biodiversity enhancement of the water environment should be a policy requirement of any development.</p> <p>-Development densities should be reduced and SuDS device capacities increased.</p> <p>-SEPA believe Local Development Plans should safeguard land form development which can be used as a flood protection area. This would help implement Local Flood Risk Management Plans.</p> <p>-New essential infrastructure developments should have a higher degree of protection from flood risk.</p>	<p>Interim position:</p> <p>Any net biodiversity enhancement policy requirement would have to be written as a desirable outcome, rather than a requirement.</p> <p>Lower densities and “over-engineered” drainage devices are desirable for flood risk management but difficult to justify and impose unreasonable burdens to development viability.</p> <p>Area Local Development Plans should safeguard land required for flood schemes and secure gifted transfer of such land. This requires scheme extents to be known and funding commitments to be made, otherwise unnecessary blight will result.</p> <p>Essential infrastructure already carries the highest degree of assessment / protection in the national land use sensitivity matrix and repeating this in Highland policy is unnecessary.</p>
<p>6) Other Amendments</p>	
<p>New Settlements</p>	
<p>Officer summary: No comments.</p>	<p>Interim position: Our intention is to address new settlements through our Area Local Development Plans.</p>
<p>Housing in Hinterland Areas</p>	
<p>Officer summary: There was general support for the proposed exemptions to be included in the replacement policy however, the following changes were</p>	<p>Interim position: Proceed with preferred approach with minor amendments. Greater detail on siting, design and operational need requirements will be</p>

<p>sought:</p> <p><i>i) Expansion of Housing Group:</i> -An increase in minimum number of houses to be considered a group and greater clarity for distances between houses in a group.</p> <p><i>iii) Renovation or Replacement Houses:</i> -Specify that replacement buildings should source materials from original building when possible.</p> <p><i>iv) Brownfield Land:</i> -Greater clarity to how the exception applies to crofting situations.</p> <p><i>v) Land Management:</i> -The inclusion of forestry management and related activities. -The inclusion of all rural small businesses.</p> <p><i>vi) Retiring Business Manager:</i> -An amendment to include all workers instead of only managers.</p> <p><i>vii) Affordable Housing:</i> -To require less burden of proof for affordable housing exception.</p>	<p>addressed in the revised Housing in the Countryside Siting and Design SG.</p> <p>These concerns will be addressed in the revised SG.</p> <p>Agree to include amendment within policy wording.</p> <p>The conversion and replacements of croft houses can be addressed through exception iii).</p> <p>We do not intend to include forest management due to the limited frequency of woodland management which does not generally require daily management. We will consider the wording of this exemption to include other legitimate rural business requiring daily management.</p> <p>We will clarify that this should also include a worker on land managed by them for a period of at least 10 years.</p> <p>Large scale affordable housing developments are most appropriate within SDAs where services and public transport are more readily available.</p>
<p>Crofting</p>	
<p>Officer summary: General support received for retaining a presumption against new houses on the best croft land. Some concern over potential conflict where the best quality croftland lies within an existing defined SDAs.</p> <p>General support for positive policies on crofting and new crofts in particular where they provide social, economic and/or environmental benefits and reflect traditional settlement patterns and help sustain services and infrastructure.</p> <p>Scottish Government and others express concern about the use of legal agreements in applying</p>	<p>Interim position: The Proposed Plan should include a revamped SDAs policy and this should reference constraints to development including locally important croft land.</p> <p>The revised policy should be supportive of the creation of new crofts, however, the revised policy should also clarify that any proposal for the creation of new crofts / townships within Hinterland Areas will only be considered as potentially acceptable if the proposal is a collective community initiative and supported by the Crofting Commission.</p> <p>The use of legal agreements to tie croft houses to the use of land will no longer apply.</p>

HwLDP Policy 35 Housing in the Countryside (Hinterland areas) and associated SG in relation to croft houses.	
Specialist Accommodation	
Comments related to the need for more sheltered housing and that care home provision on the Black Isle is urgently required.	Interim position: Further work with NHS / Care & Learning is required ensure the Development Plan reflects specialist accommodation requirements.
HMOs	
Officer summary: One Community Council requested a review of the HMO policy to reduce the concentration of HMOs in central areas which in general affect the amenity of residents, tourists and businesses. In particular, the 10% threshold for HMOs was requested to be based on bed spaces rather than individual residential units.	Interim position: Circular 2/2012 HMO: Guidance on Planning Control and Licensing indicates that Planning Authorities may wish to set different concentration levels and occupancy levels for different areas. We therefore intend to revise the HMO SG to develop a threshold based upon HMO bed spaces per head of population.
Business and Industry	
<p>Officer summary: Mixed responses were received to the inclusion of both Nigg and Ardersier as strategic business and industrial sites. Respondee requested Gill Bay Harbour and Loch Eribol Harbour to be added to the list of strategic sites and HIS sought further promotion of the UHI Campus in Inverness.</p> <p>Other non-site specific comments related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better connections between business, industrial and housing land with more master planning. - Support for large scale industrial development in rural areas, particularly in primary resources, that add value to the area's natural assets. A Community Council referenced the importance of offshore renewable energy for Caithness and acknowledgement was sought for the importance of electricity transmission network investments and generation assets. - Scottish Government raised the importance of home working as well as the need to identify nationally important clusters of industries handling hazardous substances; circumstances for the reallocation of business sites; and locating significant freight generating uses to railheads or harbours. 	<p>Interim position: We will consider the suggested amendments to the list of sites and the suggested amendments to the policy wording.</p> <p>Site specific development briefs and masterplans are prepared on a regular basis.</p> <p>Large scale industrial development in rural areas may only be appropriate in certain circumstances and specific policy support for this maybe in conflict with environmental heritage policies. Major sites should therefore be plan-led and be subject to land use allocations. We will consider the merits of making reference to key industries which are critical to economic development in Highland.</p> <p>The points raised by Scottish Government will be addressed and any requirements set out in Scottish Planning Policy will be reflected.</p>
Tourism	
Officer summary	Interim position:

<p>General support for the integration tourism policies to provide a coordinated approach to improving the tourism industry in Highland.</p> <p>Concerns were however raised from Crofting Commission and some private sector respondents about the removal of self-catering accommodation as an exception to the criteria for housing in the countryside within Hinterland Area.</p> <p>Scottish Government suggests that the Plan may want to identify and safeguard any nationally or regionally important locations for tourism or recreation development in their areas. RSPB also requested the promotion and growth of wildlife and other natural heritage related tourism.</p>	<p>Our intention is to progress as set out in the MIR.</p> <p>Comments on the self-catering market are noted and further analysis of the accommodation market may be necessary to inform the recommended position for the replacement plan.</p> <p>We will consider the merits for promoting specific tourist areas and attractions in the plan.</p>
<p>Coastal and Marine Planning</p>	
<p>Officer summary: Support for new Coastal and Marine Planning policy welcome. Respondents request detail on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how coastal classification will be identified (need to protect coastal landscapes); - consider erosion issues to reflect updated monitoring work done in Caithness and provide appropriate policy support; and - biodiversity impacts. <p>The integration with marine development is seen as essential and policy should link to the National Marine Plan.</p>	<p>Interim position: We will consider suggestions made and devise a the new policy accordingly.</p>
<p>Aquaculture</p>	
<p>Officer summary: Responses requested that previous information submitted for draft aquaculture SG be considered when developing the policy.</p> <p>Responses suggested safety issues should be included in any navigation/recreation policy text.</p> <p>Respondees also sought that the replaceemnt policy to set out the main principles that development proposals will be expected to address.</p>	<p>Interim position: We will consider suggestions made and update the policy and any associated SG accordingly.</p>
<p>Landscape</p>	
<p>Officer summary: Respondees comments related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual amenity of dark skies and impacts of light pollution have increasing impacts. 	<p>Interim position: Our intention would be to maintain the preferred approach. Officers will continue work on the Onshore Wind SG to ensure consistency between it and the Landscape Policy. Officers</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The suggested requirements for LVIA to be carried forward into the Onshore Wind SG. - Assessment of impacts to be proportionate to the scale / nature of development proposed. - One Community Council highlighted landscape as a key factor in placemaking worthy of protection. 	<p>will review the need for other environmental policies to address light pollution.</p>
<p>Trees and Woodland</p>	
<p>Officer summary: Comments received related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The updated policy reflecting Scottish Planning Policy. - Tree planting benefiting flood alleviation. - Additional community consultation prior to schemes resulting in tree removal. 	<p>Interim position: Our intention would be to maintain the preferred approach. Additional consultation associated with tree felling is not a matter for the Development Plan to consider.</p>
<p>Peat, Soils and Geodiversity</p>	
<p>Officer summary: Comments were generally supportive for the strengthening of the policy to safeguard peat and carbon rich soils. The revised policy should recognise the limitations of the SNH peat mapping, and recognise the relevance of site-specific survey.</p>	<p>Interim position: Proceed with policy drafting as described in the MIR.</p>
<p>Pollution and Air Quality</p>	
<p>Officer summary: SEPA are generally supportive of the proposed approach and advise that the revised Air Quality policy should seek not to result in transferring air quality issues to other areas or alternative streets within settlements.</p> <p>There were also concerns raised that by directing all significant footfall generating uses towards defined town centres could add to or create local air quality problems unless accompanied by suitable balancing policies on issues such as active travel and green transport.</p> <p>Respondees also sought light pollution to be minimised within developments.</p>	<p>Interim position: Our intention would be to maintain the preferred approach. Officers will consider suggestions made and devise the policies accordingly.</p>
<p>Physical Constraints and Previously Used Land</p>	
<p>No comments received.</p>	
<p>Communications Infrastructure and Design</p>	
<p>No comments received.</p>	

Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

Officer summary:

Limited respondents provided comments on this matter. Scottish Government indicate that it is positive to see the High Voltage Electricity Transmission Network, National Development 4 (from NPF3), addressed.

SHE Transmission and SHEPD (network providers and owners for transmission and distribution respectively) requested to be consulted on proposed policy wording to ensure:




























- The Plan explains why the policy has been widened to cover energy storage and distribution infrastructure.
- The principles of the Holford Rules used for the Beaully-Denny Project are used as a starting point for policy criteria with proposals seeking to avoid, if possible, the major areas of highest amenity value and to protect other environmental interests.
- The policy criteria recognises the statutory obligations upon a licence holder, of relevance to providing connections for energy generation developments as well as infrastructure provision, in the most efficient, coordinated and economical manner.
- The Spatial Strategy Map is up-to-date with respect to electricity network projects.

Lovat Highland Estates Ltd. requested the policy wording to give consideration to avoiding visual blight, electro magnetic fields and physical constraints caused by overhead transmission lines. They consider that the Council should consider the needs of the Highlands first ahead of seeking to meet national targets and keep in mind that NPF3 also recognises the important value of the environment and landscape. They feel that the Plan could set out options for specific schemes, including a subsea option for that particular scheme.

Coastal Resources Ltd. suggests that the Plan should promote a strengthened grid connection across the north coast (Durness-Dounreay) to enable renewable energy developments to be

Interim position:

The preferred approach for revising the existing policy remains appropriate. We will consult with SHE Transmission and SHEPD further as part of that process. As part of that we will seek their views on the idea of identifying the potential for a local area grid covering the north-west area of Highland. It is not intended that the Plan set out options for specific projects, but that its policy promotes an options-based approach and provides a framework for the consideration of options. The Spatial Strategy Map will be updated. It may be noted that its indication of electricity projects is not intended to imply particular routes or solutions. Where those are not yet agreed, the strategy is supportive simply of the principle of a network connection being created between two points.

<p>developed and export power. They suggest promotion of local area grid development for the north-west area, possibly incorporating energy storage systems, enabling the development of local renewable energy resources and eliminating the need for imported electricity.</p> <p>A Community Council welcomed the move to develop a more comprehensive policy on the expectations for the preparation and assessment of proposals for electricity infrastructure.</p>																
7) Other Comments Not Covered Elsewhere in the Main Issues Report																
<p>Officer summary: RSPB questioned if further reference should be made to the development of a Highland Land Use Strategy.</p> <p>A Community Council queried if the forestry industry should compensate communities for their ongoing commercial activities.</p> <p>Other various local area and site specific matters were raised.</p>	<p>Interim position: Depending upon progress with the National Land Use Strategy for Scotland, we may make specific reference to this.</p> <p>Forestry can have amenity impacts on local communities, however, such operations benefit from permitted development rights.</p> <p>Site specific matters will be considered through our area Local Development Plans.</p>															
8) Comments on Background Documents																
<p>Officer summary: The requirement to consider the impact of lighting associated with development and the resultant potential impacts against SEA Topic 1) Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna.</p>	<p>Interim position: Lighting and minimising levels of unnecessary light pollution are intended to be considered when finalising the pollution preventative policies, with their associated effects being subject of the Revised Environmental Report.</p>															
9) Comments on this Consultation																
<p>Ease to Read and Comment Q9)i) <i>How did you find it to read and understand this document?</i></p> <p>24 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Very Easy</td> <td>12.50%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Easy</td> <td>37.50%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average</td> <td>25.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hard</td> <td>20.83%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Very Hard</td> <td>4.17%</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Very Easy	12.50%		Easy	37.50%		Average	25.00%		Hard	20.83%		Very Hard	4.17%	
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<p>Quality and Presentation of the Document Q9)ii) <i>How did you find the quality and presentation of this document?</i></p> <p>20 multiple choice responses received.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Very Good</td> <td>15.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good</td> <td>65.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average</td> <td>15.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor</td> <td>0.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Very Poor</td> <td>5.00%</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Very Good	15.00%		Good	65.00%		Average	15.00%		Poor	0.00%		Very Poor	5.00%	
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Any Other Comments

Officer summary:

Of the limited number of specific comments received on the experience of the consultation, these predominantly related to:

- The document's format: language not being geared towards non-professionals with too many abbreviations, others found the layout and general content very accessible.
- The online consultation process: has the potential to discourage public engagement, however, others stated the system was very user friendly and kept subscribers up to date.
- Timescales for the consultation: the extension in time for the consultation was welcomed, however, concerns raised confusion with holding joint consultation events with other documents such as the Onshore Wind SG.
- Online consultation is difficult in certain rural areas due to poor broadband connection speeds and public consultation events are still important as this gives an opportunity to ask questions and clarify matters.

Interim position:

Noted.

Noted.

Combining events is considered to maximise Council resources and helps to avoid consultation fatigue.

Comments via email and through written response were also accepted. Numerous public consultation events were undertaken, many of which were well attended.

END