Agenda Item	12
Report No	ECI/51/24

The Highland Council

Committee: **Economy and Infrastructure**

Date: **14 November 2024**

Report Title: **Highland Local Development Plan – Evidence Gathering**

Report By: **Assistant Chief Executive - Place**

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report seeks approval to progress with the next stages of gathering and consulting upon evidence for the next Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP). The latest version of the emerging evidence pack for the HLDP is enclosed in Appendix 2 for consideration and approval. It also outlines the implications for the Local Development Plan (LDP) timetable which are proposed to be updated in the Council's Development Plan Scheme early next year.

1.2 Legislation for preparing a Development Plan require the Council to seek views on the emerging evidence for the HLDP before the proposed plan is prepared. As such the enclosed papers present evidence only, with no suggested policies or judgements made at this stage about the policies or proposals that will emerge. The focus is on what information we have and will be available for each different theme and area to ensure the evidence, and ultimately the new HLDP, meets national requirements. The consideration of the emerging evidence by Committee, and the proposed public engagement, focuses on what evidence is required, what useful data people and organisations can contribute and whether there is agreement on the suitability of the evidence.

1.3 Following consideration of these emerging evidence papers by Committee further updating of the evidence papers may be required to ensure they are up to date. The Place Standard consultation is also being kept open to give people the chance to provide input. As such, the recommendation below asks for sign-off of the final evidence packs to sit with the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee prior to being issued for public consultation, which will be undertaken in accordance with the Council published Participation Statement. Due to the evidence papers being factual only with no policy recommendations this approach is considered to be suitable and appropriate. The results from the proposed public consultation will help inform the preparation of an evidence report that will be presented to Committee for approval in mid-2025, and will also require Full Council approval, before submission to the Scottish Government's Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals for the 'Gate Check' stage. Full details of the suggested next steps are set out in Section 6 of this report.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

i. **Consider and agree** the draft evidence pack in Appendix 2, and agree for these to be issued for public consultation, noting that further work is required to gather relevant evidence for each theme and area;
ii. **agree** to delegate approval of the final evidence packs to the Assistant Chief Executive – Place, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Economy & Infrastructure Committee prior to public consultation;
iii. **Agree** the next steps for public consultation outlined in Section 7 and note the updated timescales for preparation of the LDP;
iv. **Agree** for the Call for Sites template to be issued for consultation as soon as practicable after Committee;
v. **Agree** for a revised Development Plan Scheme to be prepared and published in early 2025 that reflects on the SG requirements for LDP engagement, and the timescales and next steps outlined in Section 7 of the report; and
vi. **Note** the important role that communities are playing in shaping this evidence and the additional time that has been provided for this purpose.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - The drafting and publishing of the emerging evidence pack has been resourced through the relevant service budget and no additional resources have been/are required to finalise the project. The proposed consultation will be published on the Council webpage and will only be printed at the explicit request from a member of the public, thus avoiding publishing costs.

3.2 **Legal** - The emerging evidence set out in the enclosed papers is considered to be consistent with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the legislation and guidance for preparing Local Development Plans.

3.3 **Risk-** There are no anticipated risks associated with the emerging evidence pack.

3.4 **Health and Safety** (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) - There are no anticipated Health & Safety issues associated with this information.

3.5 **Gaelic** – The document foreword, headings and subheadings will be translated into Gaelic before it is published for consultation, in accordance with the Council Gaelic requirements.

4 Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary**

4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 16 October 2024. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that this work does not require a Full Impact Assessment, as it sets out factual information about Highland without making any recommendations or proposals on the strategy and policies that will emerge. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3

Impact Assessment Area	**Conclusion of Screening**
Equality	• Children and Young People – *no impact* • Children affected by disability – *no impact* • Older adults – *no impact*
Socio-economic	*no impact*
Human Rights	*no impact*
Children's Rights and Well-being	*no impact*
Island and Mainland Rural	*no impact*
Climate Change	*no impact*
Data Rights	*no impact*

5 **Evidence Gathering so far**

5.1 In November 2023 and February 2024 the Economy & Infrastructure Committee (E&I) gave approval for the commencement of evidence gathering for the new Highland LDP (HLDP). The Development Plans Newsletter approved in early 2024 outlines how this work is being carried out and evidence continues to be gathered on various themes. An important part of the evidence gathering stage is to seek views and early buy-in from those who will be affected by the HLDP and involved in its preparation.

5.2 The emerging evidence papers enclosed in **Appendix 2** show how the Council is moving towards a suite of evidence that has been created through collaboration with a range of partners. This report asks for wider engagement to progress so that a broader range of stakeholders have a further chance to inform the plan. The consultation proposed will, in turn, culminate in the preparation of an Evidence Report that will be subject to independent review by Scottish Government appointed Reporters. They will decide whether the Council has sufficient evidence to prepare the new plan.

5.3 The process so far has been supported by Architecture & Design Scotland, and the Key Agencies Group, through a pilot introduced by Scottish Government which sought to provide assistance for the evidence gathering stage. The input from A&DS focussed on taking a place-based and collaborative approach to evidence gathering and engaged representatives from the Key Agencies Group. This has been a hugely beneficial contribution and has helped to challenge the approach to preparing and engaging upon the emerging evidence, whilst also confirming partners' understanding of the new HLDP. It helped to draw out the biggest issues facing Highland and each part of the region now and in the future and queried the availability of data on such matters prior to wider public scrutiny. A number of the meetings and events outlined below included a lead role and/or facilitation by A&DS. They have also set the framework for engagements with partners at the sub-regional / Area Committee level.

5.4 The initial period of evidence gathering has utilised a range of consultation methods both within the Council, Key Agencies and partners, and people living, working, learning and investing in Highland. This has included:-

a) an initial **Officer Workshop** held 13 March 2024 to provide an early steer on the possible themes and initial sources of evidence, with a focus on Council services, partners and Key Agencies. This has set the scene for wider evidence gathering;
b) a **Member workshop** held on 20 June 2024 helped to confirm the emerging 'Unique Challenges' for the evidence papers;
c) on the community side one of the key tools has been the **Place Standard** which has allowed people to tell us their views about their lived experience across all Highland communities and sub-regions. Alongside the publicity on LPPs carried out by the Council, Highlife Highland have been instrumental in gathering views from young people and young persons' groups across Highland;
d) The Council has been very supportive of communities preparing **Local Place Plans** which are playing a vital role in enabling communities to shape their vision for the future. The Council's Local Place Plan Register is being kept up to date with the list of LPPs that are being prepared across Highland. At the time of writing 6 LPPs were cleared for registration covering Stratherrick & Foyers, Ardgour, Duror & Kentallen, Broadford & Strath, Black Isle and Lochalsh. A further 17 have been received by the Council for validation checking, and 22 others that we are aware of in preparation. Although there was originally a date by which LPPs had to be submitted, it is likely that LPPs received at the start of 2025 will still be possible to be taken into account in the evidence pack to be issued for consultation. This update in timescales has been shared with Community Councils and a wide range of other Community Bodies; and
e) officers are contributing to and helping facilitate **Area Place Plans** that are emerging at the sub-regional level across Highland and which will be a key consideration for the local priorities.

5.5 Although there is no prescriptive guide for the evidence gathering process, it has been necessary to monitor updates in Scottish Government and Key Agency guidance about expectations and requirements. The Heads of Planning Scotland group, as well as Scottish Government in conjunction with Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland, have been sharing expertise and lessons learned from across Scotland. We have also reviewed the first Evidence Reports prepared by Local Authorities and the feedback they received from the Gatecheck stage.

5.6 The evidence gathering process to date has also taken account of some of the more recent challenges and strategies likely to need some attention in the new HLDP such as the Housing Challenge, the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, ScotWind and other major renewables and distribution networks projects, and lack of certainty on major infrastructure projects. There will also be a need to monitor progress with the Council's Highland Investment Plan and any options for improving service delivery.

Emerging Evidence for the HLDP

5.7 As a result of this approach the emerging evidence pack in **Appendix 2** contains a series of papers outlining the "Unique Challenges" that Highland is likely to be facing over the next 10-20 years, as well as initial draft Place Profiles for the administrative areas that represent Highland's sub-regions.

5.8 Each of these papers covers an overview of the following:-

- a summary of the Key Headlines;
- the relevant policy, guidance and research available at the national level;
- a description of the unique issues and challenges facing Highland now and, in the future, relating to that theme or topic;
- what implications the national requirements will have for the HLDP policies and strategy;
- the intended approach and timescales for preparing evidence for the HLDP as well as the sources of evidence now and anticipated to be available in the future, and potential gaps in evidence, to inform preparation of the Proposed HLDP; and
- questions for consideration.

5.9 Wherever possible we have also sought to explain how each piece of evidence is intended to be used in the Proposed Plan in light of guidance and policy requirements. As mentioned in the introduction of this report, the papers avoid making any judgement or point of view on the evidence. Prior to public consultation further work is required to update the list of available evidence. Noting the volume and subject matter of these reports, they will also need to be refined, and the formatting simplified to make it easy to read and consider. This is aimed at ensuring that anyone with an interest is encouraged to shape the evidence and how the Proposed HLDP is drafted.

6 Highland's Unique Challenges

6.1 As a result of the place-based approach and analysis of the input so far, the following themes have been identified as the most significant 'Unique Challenges' that Highland is likely to face in the plan period. The Unique Challenges are summarised below and are described in more detail in the emerging evidence papers at **Appendix 2**. Approval is sought to finalise these with feedback from Committee and ongoing partnership work ahead of the consultation:-

Housing & Economy
This first section outlines a range of vital issues for Highland's future relating to:-

- Our current and future population;
- The jobs people are likely to be doing;
- The housing needs now and in the future across Highland's communities.

It outlines how demographic forecasting presents some major challenges for the region and aims to understand the inter-relationships between employment, the economy and housing need and how such issues might be addressed. It highlights the potential implications of the Highland Housing Challenge and early work such as the housing need and demand study for the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport.

One of the key headlines is that it will not be possible to prepare the Housing Need and Demand Assessment in time for the Evidence Report Gatecheck. The HNDA is critical to shape housing needs in the plan but the timescales for preparation are dependent on demographic and housing forecasts that will not be made available by Scottish Government until in mid-2025. However, this section of the paper outlines the intended approach to carrying out this work as soon as possible and what could be done next.

In light of the above, it spells out the possible measures that are being considered to address housing delivery beyond implementation of the adopted LDPs. In particular, approval is sought in recommendation (iv) to seek views on the Call for Sites: site submission template in **Appendix 3**. This sets out the suggested information that would be sought for any site nomination submitted as part of the proposed Call for Sites exercise that is requested to be carried out in early 2025, in line with the commitment made at the Housing Summit.

Infrastructure First
This section aims to provide a clear understanding of this national policy theme that requires infrastructure considerations to be at the forefront of plan preparation. In fulfilling this requirement it outlines how the Council's existing partnership for infrastructure and developer contributions might inform the ongoing approach. That includes the existing Developer Contributions Protocol - that highlights the role of communities and emerging Local Place Plans - and the Developer Contributions Action Group as a coordinating activity. It outlines an intention to strengthen links with NHS Highland to help identify, plan and fund any gaps in primary healthcare associated with new development. It mentions the infrastructure evidence expected to be provided by those submitting candidate sites under the Call for Sites above. A cross-reference is provided to the Area Profiles summarised below that each contain an overview of the infrastructure capacity.

Transport & Connectivity
This section confirms that the Local Transport Strategy, for which work has commenced, will be a key consideration for the new Local Development Plan's transport strategy and policies. The paper also highlights that a Transport Appraisal is likely to be required in the build up to the Proposed Plan. There are also considered to be opportunities to align the Delivery Programmes for each document.

Climate Change, Energy & Decarbonisation

This section confirms how existing strategies and documents such as the Highland Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy, and the Highland Net Zero Strategy, will be key considerations in shaping the strategy and policies of the new HLDP. It also sets out the role of the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy and the Social Value Charter in addressing wider climate change and decarbonisation priorities for the future. A full copy of this section will be provided on the day of Committee with a summary to form part of the introduction.

Natural Environment & Biodiversity

Recognising the varied and unique natural environment in Highland, this section looks to identify evidence for fulfilling national policy requirements for biodiversity and natural environment, for which the HLDP approach is likely to be informed by relevant policies in the adopted IMFLDP2. It also highlights the importance of baseline mapping for biodiversity assets in Highland, as well as mapping that will inform the identification of existing and potential nature networks, and to confirm natural heritage designations.

A review of the Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy, and additional evidence for soil resources (and their importance) are hoped to be available to inform the Proposed HLDP. New metrics for biodiversity net gain are anticipated to be made available at the national level to inform our new policies and requirements that comply with NPF4. It is likely that a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will be required in the build up to the Proposed HLDP being prepared. A full copy of this section will be provided on the day of Committee with a summary to form part of the introduction.

Our Coastline

This section seeks to ensure that Highland's rich and varied coastline is carefully considered in the new HLDP and particularly the implications for climate change. It includes an overview of national policy requirements, how evidence and analysis of our coastline will be used, and a more detailed description of the three existing Marine Regional Areas that provide an equivalent approach to the Area Profiles below.

Design, Wellbeing & Placemaking

This section seeks evidence to ensure our communities are modern, resilient and fit for the future, whilst safeguarding and protecting our existing important built heritage asset. The section goes on to consider how to encourage, promote and facilitate well designed developments where residents live in friendly and welcoming communities, which have quick and easy access to shops, workplaces, community facilities, play and open space, and local services, allowing them to spend less time commuting and more time with family and friends.

The creation of well-connected communities require appropriate access to shops and services, with this section considering retail locations and how the Local Living Concept will operate across both the urban and rural areas of the Highland Region.

<u>Area Profiles</u>
Using Highland's administrative Area Committee boundaries these papers provide an overview of the unique attributes and characteristics of our sub-regions that will shape the priorities and land use strategy and policies. Each of the Area Profiles contain the following:-

- Map and Key Facts and Figures
- Character of the area
- How well does the area function?
- Summary of infrastructure capacity
- Place Plans and Outcomes
- Place Standard feedback
- Overview of Local Living Analysis and Mapping

6.2 Alongside the description of the unique issues we have also carried out a check of how the emerging evidence complies with national guidance for the forthcoming Evidence Report stage. Such requirements will be summarised in a separate paper that will be issued as part of the consultation material.

7 Next Steps

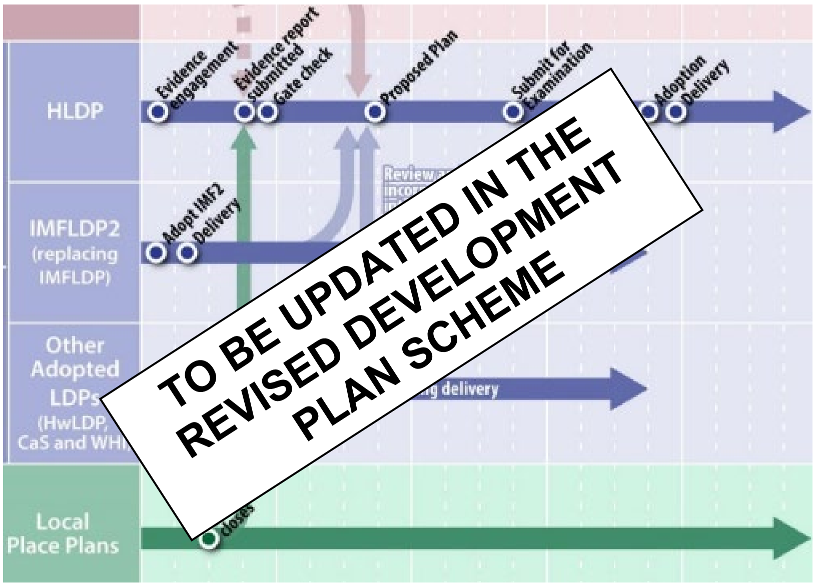
7.1 Following consideration of these emerging evidence papers by Committee, further updating of the evidence papers will be required to ensure they are up to date. This will ensure that the final evidence papers capture the latest information from partners, communities and other meetings and engagement opportunities. This includes ongoing stakeholder engagement on the Council's Area Place Plans and Community Partnerships, and various other meetings and events. National guidance also introduces new requirements for engagement on the HDLP and these are intended to be addressed in the Development Plan Scheme. We're also keeping the Place Standard consultation open to give people the chance to provide input. As such, the recommendation asks for sign-off of the final evidence packs to sit with the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee prior to being issued for public consultation. Due to the evidence papers being factual only with no policy recommendations this approach is considered to be suitable and appropriate.

7.2 The public consultation is proposed to run from early 2025 and will be hosted online but with ongoing attendance at meetings and workshops with communities and partners to refine the evidence. The consultation will adhere to the Council's approved Participation Statement for Development Plans consultations, although this will also be updated to reflect the latest requirements, including engagement with specific community and interest groups. The feedback from the consultation will help inform the preparation of the Evidence Report that will be presented to Committee for approval in mid-2025, and will also require Full Council approval, before submission to the Scottish Government's Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals for the 'Gate Check' stage. The Gate Check will provide an independent assessment of whether the planning authority has sufficient information and a sound evidence base to prepare the LDP.

Implications for Development Plan Scheme

7.3 It may be noted that the original target was to complete the evidence report by the end of 2024. However, alongside other resource challenges across the team it has taken more time than was envisaged to pull together the evidence for the plan. It is proposed to allow a final few weeks to gather the remaining evidence before commencing with the public consultation at the start of 2025. This means that the Evidence Report is now likely to be submitted to Scottish Government in summer 2025.

7.4 The annual Development Plan Scheme would ordinarily be provided to the first E&I Committee of the calendar year. Instead, approval is sought to progress with these updates incorporating the amended HLDP timescales in the 2025 Development Plan Scheme. This is proposed to be issued in early 2025 ideally alongside the consultation on the HLDP emerging evidence. This will also pick up on the requirements for engagement that the new style HLDP will be required to follow as outlined above. However, all other aspects of the agreed approach to consultation, as outlined in the Participation Statement, would remain unchanged.



Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 11 October 2024

Author: Scott Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Highland LDP Emerging Evidence
Appendix 3 – Call for Sites – Draft Site Submission Template

Integrated Impact Assessment Screening

About proposal

What does this proposal relate to? Evidence Gathering for new Highland Local Development Plan

Proposal name: Evidence Gathering for new Highland Local Development Plan

High level summary of the proposal: Collation of factual information to inform the next Highland Local Development Plan

Who may be affected by the proposal? No persons impacted by gathering of data. This paper has a positive effect as it allows people to provide views on the evidence that will be used at the next stage of the process. At that stage, the interpretation of that evidence and its use in formulating the Highland Local Development may have an impact and an IIA will be undertaken at that time, but at this stage there is no effect.

Start date of proposal: 14/11/2024

End date of proposal: 31/03/2025

Does this proposal result in a change or impact to one or more Council service? No

Does this relate to an existing proposal? Yes

Provide details of the existing proposal: Evidence gathering is the first stage in reviewing the Council's existing local development plans

---

Author details

Name: Tim Stott

Job title: Principal Planner

Email address: Tim.Stott@highland.gov.uk

Service: Place

Responsible officer details

Name: Scott Dalgarno

Job title: Development Plans Manager

Email address: Scott.Dalgarno@highland.gov.uk

Sign off date: 2024-10-23

Equalities, poverty, and human rights

Protected characteristics

Select what impact the proposal will have on the following protected characteristics:

Sex: No impact

Age: No impact

Disability: No impact

Religion or belief: No impact

Race: No impact

Sexual orientation: No impact

Gender reassignment: No impact

Pregnancy and maternity: No impact

Marriage and civil partnership: No impact

Protected characteristics impact details: n/a - the later interpretation of evidence collected and its use in the formulation of planning policy may have impacts and will require an IIA, but no impact at this stage

Poverty and socio-economic

What impact is the proposal likely to have on the following?

Prospects and opportunities: No impact

Places: No impact

Financial: No impact

Poverty and socio-economic impact details: n/a - the later interpretation of evidence collected and its use in the formulation of planning policy may have impacts and will require an IIA, but no impact at this stage

Human rights

Which of the below human rights will be affected by this proposal? No human rights will be affected

What impact do you consider this proposal to have on the human rights of people? No impact

Human rights impact details: n/a - the later interpretation of evidence collected and its use in the formulation of planning policy may have impacts and will require an IIA, but no impact at this stage

Equalities, poverty and human rights screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to equalities, poverty and human rights? No impact

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Children's rights and wellbeing

What likely impact will the proposal have on children and young people?n/a - the later interpretation of evidence collected and its use in the formulation of planning policy may have impacts and will require an IIA, but no impact at this stage

Which of the below children's rights will be affected by the proposal?No children's rights will be affected

Explain how the children's rights selected above will be affected:n/a - the later interpretation of evidence collected and its use in the formulation of planning policy may have impacts and will require an IIA, but no impact at this stage

Children's rights and wellbeing screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to children's rights and wellbeing?No impact

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Data protection

Will your proposal involve processing personal data? No

Data protection screening assessment

What change will there be to the way personal data is processed?No personal data will be processed

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Island and mainland rural communities

Does your proposal impact island and mainland rural communities? No

Island and mainland rural communities screening assessment

What impact do you think there will be to island and mainland rural communities?No difference

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

Climate change

Does the proposal involve activities that could impact on greenhouse gas emissions (CO_2e)? No

Does the proposal have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity? No

Does the proposal have the potential to influence resilience to extreme weather or changing climate? No

Provide information regarding your selection above: the later interpretation of evidence collected and its use in the formulation of planning policy may have impacts and will require an IIA and an SEA which deals with these issues in far more detail, but no impact at this stage

Climate change screening assessment

Have you identified potential impact for any of the areas above or marked any as not known? No

Is a Full Impact Assessment required? No

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Local Development Plan

Emerging Evidence

Ionadail na Gàidhealtachd Plana Leasachaidh

Fianais a tha a' tighinn am bàrr

October 2024

Committee Report Appendix 2

www.highland.gov.uk


Photo by form PxHere: https://pxhere.com/en/photo/771543

Contents

Contents

This report presents the emerging evidence for the new Highland Local Development Plan. An important part of the evidence gathering stage is to seek views and early buy-in from those who will be affected by the HLDP and involved in its preparation. As such, this report is being prepared for public consultation in early 2025 to allow for feedback ahead of an Evidence Report being prepared for the new Plan for consideration by government appointed Reporters through a stage known as the 'Gatecheck'. The Gatecheck stage of the LDP preparation will confirm whether the Reporter believes the Council has sufficient and sound evidence to prepare the new HLDP. It is therefore important to seek people's views on this evidence before it is reaches that first formal stage. Before it goes out for consultation the Council's Economy & Infrastructure Committee will also be asked to input and agree to the emerging evidence report. The report will then be finalised before being published for consultation.

These papers focus on the evidence available to support preparation of the Proposed Plan. In line with national guidance for LDP preparation it focuses on evidence only, with no suggested policies or judgements made at this stage about the policies or proposals that will emerge.

The initial period of evidence gathering has utilised a range of consultation methods both within the Council, Key Agencies and partners, and people living, working, learning and investing in Highland. This has included:

- Officer and Member Workshops
- Data gathering from a range of partners and agencies
- A Place Standard consultation
- Community-led Local Place Plans
- Area Place Plans that are emerging at the sub-regional level across Highland

The emerging evidence will also need to consider some of the more recent challenges and strategies likely to need some attention in the new HLDP such as the Housing Challenge, the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, Scotwind and other major renewables and distribution networks projects, and lack of certainty on major infrastructure projects. There will also be a need to monitor progress with the Council's Highland Investment Plan and any options for improving service delivery. Updates at the national level from Scottish Government and Jey Agencies will also be monitored closely.

The evidence is presented as a series of papers that provide an overview of the unique challenges that are likely to face Highland now and in the next 10-15 years that the plan will cover. It also sets out draft Place Profiles for each of the administrative areas that represent Highland's sub-regions.

The structure and length of the **unique challenge** reports vary due to the specific nature of the issues covered, but they typically comprise the following elements:

- the relevant policy, guidance and research available at the national level;
- a description of the unique issues and challenges facing Highland now and in the future relating to that theme or topic;
- the likely implications of national requirements for the HLDP policies and strategy;
- the intended approach and timescales for preparing evidence for the HLDP as well as the sources of evidence now and anticipated to be available in the future, and potential gaps in evidence, to inform preparation of the Proposed HLDP; and
- key questions for consideration.

The **Area Profiles** set out a range of data for each administrative area of Highland. They provide an overview of the unique attributes and characteristics of our sub-regions that will shape the priorities and land use strategy and policies. Each of the Area Profiles contain the following:

- Map and Key Facts and Figures
- Character of the area
- How well does the area function?
- Summary of infrastructure capacity
- Place Plans and Outcomes
- Place Standard feedback
- Overview of Local Living Analysis and Mapping

Alongside, the final evidence paper will include a review of how the emerging evidence complies with national guidance for what needs to be included in the future Evidence Report. Such requirements will be summarised in a separate paper that will be issued as part of the consultation material.

A consultation on this emerging evidence is scheduled to be launched in early 2025 and will be hosted online but with ongoing attendance at meetings and workshops with communities and partners to refine the evidence. The feedback from the consultation will help inform the preparation of the Evidence Report that will be presented to Committee for approval in mid-2025, and will also require Full Council approval, before submission to the Scottish Government's Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals for the 'Gate Check' stage. The Gate Check will provide an independent assessment of whether the planning authority has sufficient information and a sound evidence base to prepare the LDP.

Key headlines

This first section outlines a range of vital issues for Highland's future relating to:

- Our current and future population;
- The jobs people are likely to be doing;
- The housing needs now and in the future across Highland's communities.

It outlines how demographic forecasting presents some major challenges for the region and aims to understand the inter-relationships between employment, the economy and housing need and how such issues might be addressed. It highlights the potential implications of the Highland Housing Challenge and early work such as the housing need and demand study for the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport.

One of the key headlines is that it will not be possible to prepare the Housing Need and Demand Assessment in time for the Evidence Report Gatecheck. The HNDA is critical to shape housing needs in the plan but the timescales for preparation are dependent on demographic and housing forecasts that will not be made available by Scottish Government until in mid-2025. However, this section of the paper outlines the intended approach to carrying out this work as soon as possible and what could be done next.

In light of the above, it spells out the possible measures that are being considered to address housing delivery beyond implementation of the adopted LDPs. In particular, approval is sought in recommendation (iv) to seek views on the Call for Sites: Draft Site Submission Template at Appendix 3 of this Committee paper. This sets out the suggested information that would be sought for any site nomination submitted as part of the proposed Call for Sites exercise that is requested to be carried out in early 2025 as part of the wider HLDP engagement.

Housing and Economy

Headline Issue:
<u>Our population is ageing, and our younger workforce is being drawn to urban centres in Highland and beyond.</u>

Like much of Scotland and the rest of the world, Highland has an ever-changing population and workforce. This has included a rapid period of growth, notably around Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth region, which has previously been named as the fastest growing city in Europe. Meanwhile, the pandemic has reinforced the appeal of rural living as a lifestyle choice. Yet, population levels in some rural areas remain static or in decline and there are concerns over the potential impacts of this, especially when coupled with ageing population. There are growing calls for a proactive approach to repopulation in Highland which is echoed in several community and area place plans (e.g. NW2045).

There are major opportunities to start addressing these issues with Highland having secured the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport (ICFGF) which aims to bring up to 10,000 new jobs and a range of benefits to the wider region. The project aims to diversify the economy, accelerate local and national decarbonisation and attract people to new employment and education opportunities.

Planning for such change in an area like Highland is extremely challenging, including the need to align the timing and delivery of housing and employment, and to ensure the delivery of infrastructure to support this scale of change. Recently, the Council declared a Housing Challenge because of the need to increase housing supply. To address these issues through the new Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP) this paper aims to consider and understand how the population has changed in terms of demographics, location, and workforce availability, and to plan for the region's future housing and economy.

Collectively, this data will help inform where to plan for future housing needs and demand and employment opportunities in order to fulfil ambitious national and local policies, whilst concurrently developing resilient local communities across the region.

Having considered the key issues facing housing and the economy in the Highlands, the Council concludes that they are so linked that they need to be considered together. The Council has identified the following three themes that structure the issues and evidence covered under this *Unique Challenge*:

1. **Demographics - Where are people coming from and going?**
2. **Economic & Employment Needs - What are they going to do for work?**
3. **Housing Needs - Where are they going to live / why are so many houses being built?**

Housing and Economy

1. <u>Demographics - Where are people coming from and going?</u>

The demographic data used in this section is based on the National Records Scotland (NRS) (2022) for the Highland Council Area[1]. Much of the 2022 Census data is still being processed and projections based upon this data may not be available until late 2025. Therefore, the Council will need to make a decision on the suitability of the currently available data, particularly for population and household forecasting purposes which will feed into the HNDA.

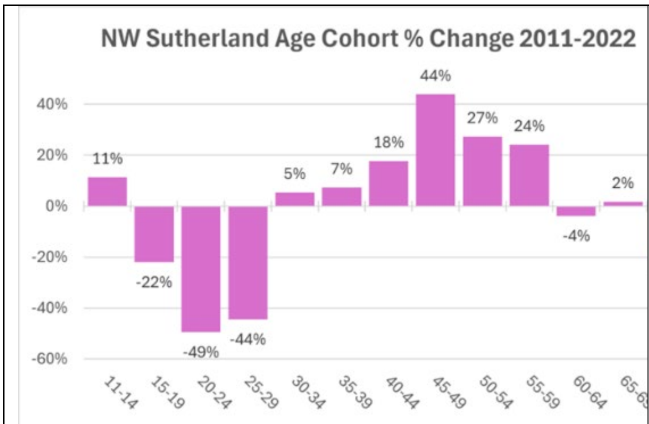
It will be essential to have a clear understanding of the demographic change that is being experienced across the region to inform the strategy and policies of the new HLDP. The main source of data for this will be the NRS mid-year population estimates and the results of the 2022 Census summarised below.

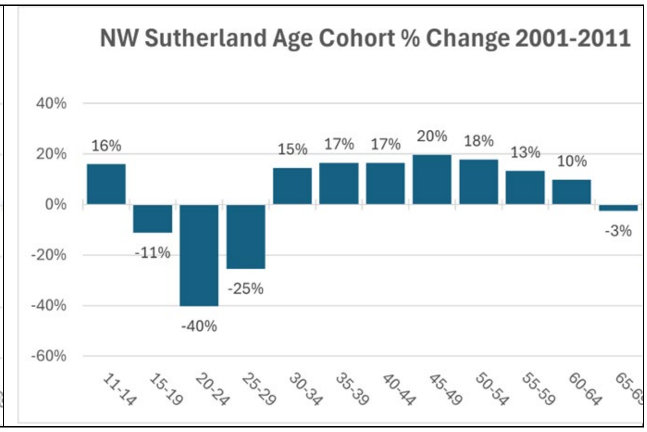
The latest population data available is the 2023 mid-year estimate showing a population of **236330**. This compares with 235710 from the 2022 mid-year estimate. This latest figure indicates that the rise experienced across the Highlands between 2011 (232,132) to 2021 (238,060) may have slowed . However, between the 2011 census and 2022 census, Highland's population has still increased from 232,132 to 235,350 – which represents a 1.4 % increase, which is below the Scotland average of 2.7%.

Looking at this population change in more detail across the Council area. In 2022, there were 1,909 births, which is an increase of 1.3% from 2021 when there were 1,885 births. Of the 1,909 births in 2022, 904 (47.4%) were female and 1,005 (52.6%) were male. These were 2,940 deaths across the Highlands in 2022, which is an increase of 3.9% from 2,831 deaths in 2021. Of the 2,940 deaths in 2022, 1,441 (49.0%) were female and 1,499 (51.0%) were male.

Given these figures, it is evident that deaths are outstripping births across Highland and therefore it is migration that is driving population growth. Net migration for Highland Council area was +1030 in the year to mid 2022 compared with +820 in the year to mid 2019 (figures from 2020 and 2021 are particularly effected by the COVID pandemic)

Historically it has been noted that the highest level of total net migration was 30- to 34-year-olds. Whereas the 15- to 19-year-old bracket experienced a net reduction, with data below from across NW Sutherland demonstrating this trend.





[1] https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/highland-council-profile.html

Housing and Economy

The latest projections available for the Highland Council area (based on trend to 2018) suggest po 237,886 (High Migration projection) is still considered to be realistic Updated council level Sub-National Population projections are due in early 2025 rebased against the 2022 Census data.

There are a number of other sources of demographic information at the sub-region/local level that can help inform the detailed strategy and tailored approach. The Area Profiles set out data for some of the following issues that need further consideration through the plan process:

- Population change
- Births and deaths
- Housing costs and availability
- Migration
- Age profile
- Life Expectancy
- Household size
- Homelessness
- 16-24 school and university leavers
- Housing waiting lists

Alongside the national and local data sources outlined above population and housing projections based on the 2022 Census are not expected to be released until mid-2025. Those forecasts will be fundamental pieces of evidence to inform the demographic profile and corresponding needs for the future. It is therefore proposed to carry out the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) once this key updated data is available.

Consultation Questions

Question 1: Are the sources of evidence, data and research outlined for the National and regional level suitable and appropriate? Is any data source missing?

Question 2: What further evidence is there of the changing population demographic being experienced across Highland?

2. Economic & Employment Needs - What do people do and what will people do?

Highland has a wide range of employment opportunities, which includes both long established and emerging sectors, including:

> Agriculture, Aquaculture, Forestry, Renewables Sector, Oil and Gas, Freeport, Space, Retail, Construction, Government, Military, Education, Healthcare and Care, Environmental, Tourism, Pharmaceuticals, Research, High Tech / New Industries, Remote Working, Voluntary.

However, initial analysis of employment issues combined with anecdotal evidence indicate that the unique demographic issues outlined above present particular challenges in Highland, particularly for more fragile and remote communities. Similarly, the Chambers of Commerce, NHS Highland and HIE have highlighted that the availability of housing is a direct impediment to the viability of business and in people taking up various vital public and private sector roles in Highland.

New Census 2022 data has just been released giving counts of employment across the range of sectors employing workers across the Highland Council area. This information will be analysed and compared to better understand the specific features of employment in the Highland context.

Additionally, it is understood that Highland has a high percentage of seasonal employment, which is intrinsically linked to a unique housing need. Moving forward the Council will need to fully understand the challenges this creates and seek detailed evidence to support this.

Similarly, there are other sectors for which Highland relies on expertise and staffing from outwith the area. For example, the demand for temporary construction workers requires the provision of suitable accommodation during their stay, ideally in housing that can be made permanent, and encourage permanent residents and workers in the region.

The Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport has the opportunity to help expand and diversify employment opportunities of Highland (see below) and the Sumitomo Electric subsea cable factory currently under construction close to the Port of Nigg is testament to the area's potential.

As evidenced in the Demographic Section above, the region's rural population is ageing and inherently this profile of the population, requires greater and specialist health and social care needs. Coupled with a reduction in the working age population across the rural locales, this creates challenges in how the Council (and service partners) can provide adequate services and staffing in the future; including the provision of care at home, sheltered accommodation, and accessible and adaptable housing.

Key Opportunities

The renewables sector is an established and prominent part of the economy and the job market in Highland. The latest stage in Highland's role in renewables and national decarbonisation has been confirmed through the successful awards of Green Freeport status for the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport. Other major renewables projects such as the grid capacity upgrades by SSEN, offshore and onshore renewables, as well as the emerging space industry, are providing new opportunities to diversify the economy.

To help support these industries and the creation of new jobs, the correlation between housing need and demand data and employment growth needs to be analysed carefully. Housing needs are typically identified by the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) tool, but the Council is concerned that current government advice does not allow economic development to be factored in to those calculations. However, a Local Development Plan can make adjustments for economic development in identifying the Local Housing Land Requirement. There are emerging examples that follow a process similar to the English Housing and Economic Needs Assessment tool (HENA). We think there is merit in this approach through the HNDA process. The HENA model is one of the options the Council has under consideration to assess the correlation between housing and employment in certain locations.

Taking account of the HENA based approach the Council has already undertaken a study to assess the likely implications of the Green Freeport on housing needs with particular regard the number and types of jobs likely to be created and the corresponding housing need and demand. This informs the approach and the sequence of evidence gathering that is felt to be required for the HLDP. This is covered in more detail in the Housing section 2C Housing below.

In light of the steps outlined above, this report seeks views from partners, communities, stakeholders, employers and developers to verify the challenges identified above and help inform and identify the ways the HLDP can address them.

Where will people be employed?

The NPF4, Business & Industry section requires Local Development Plans to allocate sufficient land for business and industry, taking into account of evidence collected via a Business and Industry Land Audit. NPF4 goes on to require that Local Development Plans identify a range of sites that meet current market demand, location, size & quality in terms of accessibility.

In identifying allocations for business and industry uses, the Council will consider local economic strategies, support broader objectives of delivering a low carbon and net zero economic recovery, and a fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

The Council's current suite of adopted area Local Development Plans includes a high number of allocations and policies across the region. Any Local Place Plans that have put forward sites for consideration will also be considered. This will form the starting point for considering the most appropriate sites for business and industry in the new HLDP.

Additionally, the Council is in the process of reviewing and updating its 2018 Business & Industrial Land Audit (BILA). Once complete this review will inform the availability of the business and industrial land supply for Use Classes 4 (Business), 5 (General industry) and 6 (Storage or distribution) based on the allocations within the adopted LDPs and potential windfall sites. In doing so it will identify any shortcomings in terms of provision and acceptability across each locality and will be used as the starting point to determine if there is a need for further allocations.

Given the extensive rural nature of the region the Council's area Local Development Plans have allocated Economic Development Areas (EDAs). These are places, outwith the main settlements, which either already are or have the potential to become important economic centres. A set of guiding principles is included for each EDA identified in the Plan to guide future development in that area, which will assist in determining the extent and location of suitable opportunities.

The Council will also use evidence from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), which looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. This data will help inform areas of poor employment and education and allow for a tailored approach to the Council's future allocations.

Housing and Economy

The Council updated its Vacant and Derelict Land Survey in 2023 to establish the extent and state of vacant and derelict land across its area. This dataset will be used to help inform future land allocation for business and industrial use.

In 2016, the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal was signed and formalised the commitment of £315 million worth of funding - £135m from the Scottish Government, supported by £127m from The Highland Council and its partners, and another £53m from the UK Government. The Deal contains a number of proposals under three broad headings:

1. A Growing Economy
2. Enabling the Economy
3. A Skilled Economy

And proposed to deliver:

- Over 1,000 direct jobs as a result of City-Region Deal projects with a further 2,200 additional jobs in the construction sector
- A skilled labour market moving towards a high skilled high wage economy.
- A centre of excellence in rural and digital healthcare with sufficient mass to attract research and investment and fully exploits the commercial opportunities
- Business growth through effective digital connectivity and promotion of innovation
- Improved productivity and real wages, which are estimated to increase by almost 1.3 per cent and bring £100m per annum to the regional economy;
- A rebalanced population with the aim of retaining and/or attracting 1,500 young people in the 18-29 age group over the initial 10-year deal period;
- 6,000 new houses over 20 years of which 1,800 will be affordable homes; and
- Private sector leverage from housing building and, through opening up land for commercial development, would see a return over a 20-year period of around £800 million being invested in the economy of the city and region.

As part of the HLDP evidence gathering, a review of the City-Region Deal Annual & Quarterly reports will be conducted to confirm the status and delivery of key projects.

Furthermore, the Council proposes to review and utilise evidence from stakeholders, including the Inverness Employment Land Demand Study currently being undertaken by HIE and HIE Business baseline survey (when available). Additionally, evidence from Highland Business Gateway support services and Highland Opportunity Investment Ltd (HOIL) which offers accessible business finance and advice on new business start-ups and main employment sectors will be sought.

Tourism

Tourism plays a major role in Highland, with the region attracting 7 million visitors, generating around £1.6 billion of economic impact each year and supporting around 25,000 jobs. Inevitably there is a desire for this to continue, the implications of tourism will require ongoing management and action; these issues are covered in the transport, housing and heritage papers.

The Council is keen to deliver a sustainable and thriving tourism industry in Highland and has developed a 'Draft Sustainable Tourism Strategy', with the following the priorities below will provide the strategic direction for the Council:

A. Our People – To improve the quality of life and provide high quality job opportunities for Highland people, addressing the demographic challenges and helping to create the conditions for tourism to grow harmoniously with the people who live here.

B. Our Place – To ensure sustainable and responsible tourism that enhances the natural environment and nurtures our cultural heritage, improves community wellbeing and creates thriving and prosperous places across Highland.

C. Our Economy – To support a vibrant and dynamic visitor economy that has year-round appeal, spread evenly across the region and contributes towards a sustainable and responsible industry

This strategy will be utilised to help inform tourism development and site allocations across the region as part of the HLDP.

In addition, the Council Tourism Service has a range of datasets available at a local level and these will be considered at the sub-region/area profile level.

Housing and Economy

3. Housing Needs - Where are they going to live / why are so many houses being built?

Highland Housing Challenge

Housing is crucial to the growth of the Highland economy and the sustainability of its communities, and for the last 24 years on average the Council has been building, around **1100** houses per annum (Detailed Data is available via the Housing Dashboard). In July this year, the Council declared a Housing Challenge (HC/21/24) based on economic modelling from pressures associated with the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport and the increase in workforce coming into the area to deliver the SSE infrastructure works required to increase the capacity of the electricity network.

Taking account of the Housing Challenge, and the HENA based approach outlined above, the Council has already undertaken an initial housing need and demand study for the Green Freeport (attached at Appendix A) to assess the likely implications of the Green Freeport on housing needs with particular regard the number and types of jobs likely to be created and the corresponding housing need and demand. The study predicts **24,000 new** homes will be required in the next 10 years which is over double the number of homes that have historically been delivered. This does not take account of other significant renewables and other national infrastructure projects that may also affect these needs and demands. Whilst the baseline data and forecasting will have to be formally considered and verified through the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, and mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and forecasting of jobs aligned to housing is also needed, the Housing Challenge and the initial Green Freeport Housing Study indicate that more urgent work is required to bolster housing delivery resulting from implementation of adopted LDPs and to bridge across to the new HLDP.

Whilst new homes will be required right across the region, as previously experienced (see Housing Completion section below) and because of the locational aspect of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, the bulk of the new homes are expected to be required within the Inner Moray Firth area.

As IMFLDP2 was adopted in June 2024 (June 2024 - HC/20/24) it provides the main focus for housing delivery in the short term alongside the other adopted Area LDPs. Work carried out as part of new requirements to prepare a 'Housing Pipeline' indicates that the larger sites (of 25+ units remnant capacity) lie within the IMFLDP area. As shown in the 'Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Area - Deliverable Housing Land Pipeline' should all these sites be fully built out within the next 10-years they could provide **15,405** housing units.

As the majority of new housing delivered across the Inner Moray Firth are developed by volume housebuilders, the control of which is beyond the Council's remit, it is realistic to assume and therefore to plan that not all of these 75 sites will be fully built out within the next 10 years.

It should also be noted that the 'Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Area - Deliverable Housing Land Pipeline' only considered sites of 25 or more units. Smaller sites, including a large number of 'Windfall' or non-development plan allocated sites and single house units (both within urban areas and rural areas), account for around 350 units annually across Highland, and these will also play an important role in meeting the Housing Challenge.

However, as outlined in the Housing Challenge report (HC/21/24) it is likely that the Council will need to explore various mechanisms for increasing housing supply to match the likely significant acceleration in need and demand. The declared Housing Challenge currently proposes to do this through several mechanisms, namely:

a) Call for Sites

To help prepare for the potential need to accelerate housing provision, it is proposed to hold a 'Call for Sites' engagement exercise in late 2024 or early 2025. To facilitate this, the Council has drafted a 'Site Submission Template' (at Appendix B) which is proposed to be issued for consultation immediately after the Committee to seek views on the information that is proposed to be sought and help potential interested parties in preparing the relevant information required. When finalised, the Call for Sites exercise is intended to be run as part of the consultation on the wider HLDP Emerging Evidence.

The template has been designed to allow for early Strategic Environmental Assessment work to be carried out on all site submissions and options, to help decide whether any sites can be considered through the Masterplan Consent Area process where there is a demonstrable need to increase supply.

b) Masterplan Consent Areas:

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced the concept of Masterplan Consent Areas (MCAs) as a new tool to positively influence and accelerate the unlocking of key sites where delivery to date has been constrained.

The purpose of MCA schemes will be to streamline the planning and other consent processes and to allow issues to be considered as part of a joined-up approach. Whilst MCAs will be tailored to the individual circumstances there will be the option to grant:

- planning permission,
- roads construction consent,
- listed building consent, and
- conservation area consent

The consequence is that within adopted MCA areas, development could be brought forward without the need for consent as long as it is in line with the agreed scheme. The Council response to the recent Scottish Government consultation on their introduction (ECI/12/2024), noted that one area where they could be used, is as a delivery mechanism to seek to unlock presently constrained development sites in support of strategic employment growth associated with the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport (ICFGF) project and specifically the Green Freeport Tax Sites.

Additionally, the Committee Report confirms, there is the potential to utilise MCAs to deliver additional housing land and suggests that the following housing sites, which were removed from the recently adopted IMFLDP2 following the Reporter's recommendations, have been subject to previous landowner, agency and community consultation, and received in-principle support from Council Committee(s) at the time of the time the Local Development Plan was finalised for Examination; could, subject to suitable masterplanning and site specific consideration, be considered as MCAs:

- Land at Nairn East (previously identified within the Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (IMFpLDP2) as allocation NA05).

- Land at Croft Arthur and Viewfield, Tain (previously identified within the IMFpLDP2 as allocation TN04 and part of TN06).
- Land at Culcairn, Evanton (previously identified within the aIMFLDP as allocation EV3).
- Land at Alness East (previously identified within the aIMFLDP as allocation AL3, AL6 (part) and AL4).

Scottish Ministers have just published the secondary legislation on MCAs and the Council is currently reviewing this to inform how MCAs are used in Highland.

The Call for Sites engagement proposed above

c) <u>Allocated Housing Site Density</u>

Each housing allocation site within the Council LDPs contains an indicative housing capacity. Historically, housing densities across Highland have been relatively low in comparisons to other areas across Scotland; mainly given that the prevalent character of the area was one of a rural landscape.

However, as Highland's main urban centre and focus for development it is considered appropriate for sites across the Inner Moray Firth area in particular to examine where there might be opportunities to increase housing densities, taking account of the Highland Housing Challenge, whilst maintaining high quality design and access to services and transport. One option under consideration would be to allow a 10-15% uplift on the number of housing units upon IMFLDP2 sites, on the proviso that the amenity, privacy, design, placemaking and open space provision is maintained.

Doing so will result in approximately 2,000 extra housing units based on the allocated provision. Moreover, it will also deliver additional affordable housing units and help achieve the climate & ecological emergency declaration.

d) <u>A Deliverable Housing Land Pipeline</u>

To deliver the increased supply of homes, it is important to strategically plan the upscaling of housebuilding across the region, as it is unrealistic to assume that the Council and housebuilding industry can double house completions immediately; instead a gradual uplift over a number of years is more likely.

Consequently, in line with Scottish Government requirements, the Council proposes to develop and promote a housing pipeline (as shown below) to manage and ensure the upscaling of house building is on target. It is proposed this pipeline process will be utilised across all the Council's Housing Market Areas and updated on a regular basis, in order to allow the Council to react and be flexible to ensure the Housing Challenge is delivered.

	Planning in Principle application Pending	Full Planning application Pending	Planning in Principle application Approved	Full Planning application approved, not yet submitted for a Building Warrant	Full Planning application approved & submitted for a Building Warrant, but still pending	Full Planning application approved, submitted for a Building Warrant	Full Planning & Building Warrant applications approved, but not yet complete
1-49 House sites							

50+ House sites							

e) Rural Repopulation

Whilst most of the new housing is directed to existing settlements for service and sustainability reasons, Highland is predominantly rural and as such, a percentage of the new housing required to meet the Housing Challenge will have to be accommodated in the rural landscape.

The Council through HwLDP Policies and the adopted Rural Housing Supplementary Guidance and now NPF4 Policy 17 (Rural Homes) provides support for rural housing right across the region. As part of the HLDP evidence gathering, the Council will consider developing additional planning policies which are supportive of rural housing throughout Highland, whilst safeguarding the rural landscape and creating resilient high quality sustainable communities.

Whilst there challenges around the costs for delivering rural housing and availability of workforce the rural housing needs and to support the rural economy. There are a number of examples of projects, agencies and funding mechanisms that are being utilised across Highland and other rural areas of Scotland that address these issues. The Council will therefore work the Scottish Government and other partners to look at opportunities to apply these principles and ways of working to other rural housing projects.

Additionally, the Council proposes to engage with large rural estates and landowners to identify if there is greater support and policy it can provide to this important sector in realising additional housing sites around existing rural communities. This will build on the work of the Council Repopulation Coordinator based in North West Sutherland.

Moreover, Section 15(5) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and NPF4 Policy 17 (Rural Homes) requires the planning authority to set out its views on the desirability of allocating land for the purposes of resettlement. Many northern and western areas of Highland have a long history of population decline. This decline is attributed to significant events in history, including the Highland Clearances, Potato Famine and the World Wars. More recently, continuing population decline in certain areas of Highland are understood to be due to issues surrounding housing, healthcare, transport, childcare and education.

Historic population decline in Highland resulted in a number of settlements in Highland becoming uninhabited. Further work will be undertaken to establish geographies of previously inhabited areas in Highland. It is likely however, that in the interests of directing development to the most sustainable locations and utilising existing infrastructure, that there are overriding benefits of focusing growth within and close to existing settlements, particularly those that continue to experience population decline, rather than allocating new locations for the purposes of resettlement. Rural development policies will guide the location of development outwith settlements and are generally supportive of the principle of new homes in remote rural areas. Further consideration will be given to this issue as plan preparation progresses, including ongoing reviews of Local Place Plans and expressions of interest in development of areas.

Highland Housing Delivery:

Housing and Economy

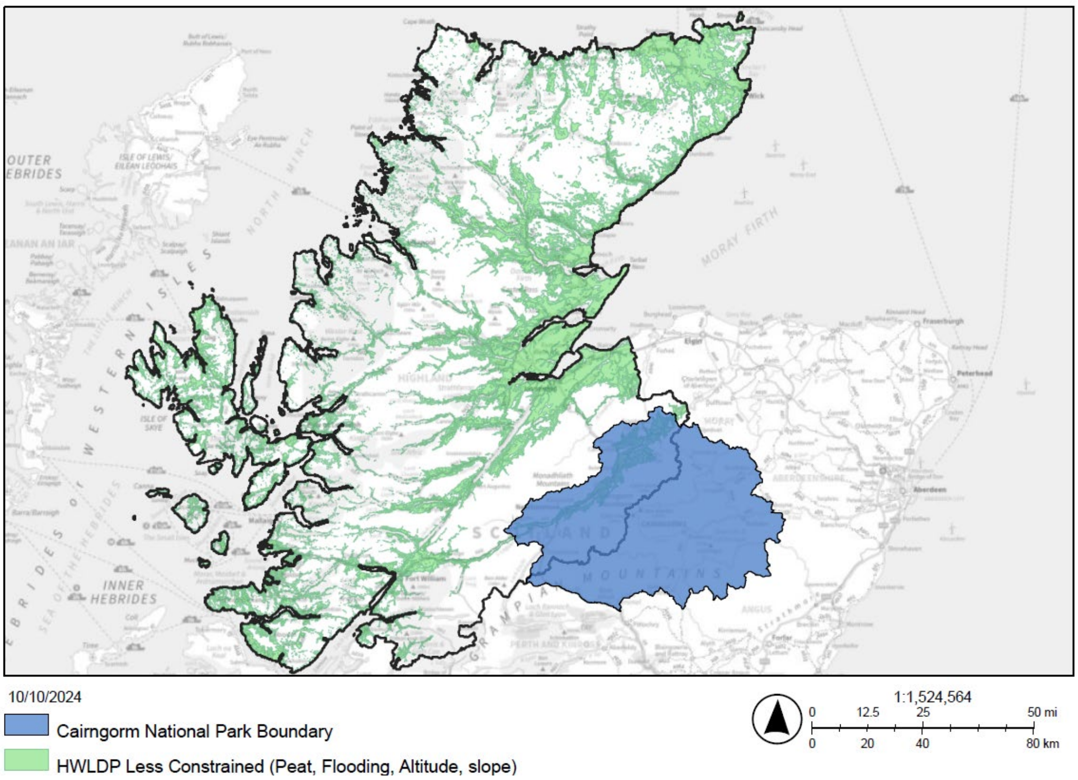
The previous section has specifically focused on how the Council can adapt to deliver the Housing Challenge. However, there are other issues and requirements the Council needs to consider in the development of the HLDP and these are considered below:

a) <u>Developable Land</u>

Whilst the region land mass is extensive, given a number of physical, servicing and heritage constraints the actual land area appropriate for development is limited. The map below shows in green, land which is considered less constrained following the removal of the following constraints:

- Land prone to flood risk
- Land over 380m in altitude
- Land which avoids national and international heritage areas
- Land with an excessive gradient

As part of the Evidence Gathering for each of the area profiles, this data will be refined and further developed to provide localised mapping showing the proportion of land with less of these major contraints to development.



b) <u>Housing Land Requirement</u>

NPF4 requires Local Development Plans to identify a Local Housing Land Requirement for the area they cover. This is to meet the duty for a housing target and to represent how much housing land is required.

Furthermore, NPF4 requires the Local Housing Land Requirement to be ambitious via a plan-led approach and exceed the 10 year Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) set out in Annex E of NPF4. The MATHLR for the Highlands is 9,500 units.

NPF4 goes on to say that deliverable land should be allocated to meet the 10-year Local Housing Land Requirement in locations that create quality places for people to live. Areas that may be suitable for new homes beyond 10 years are also to be identified. The locations of where new homes are allocated should be consistent with local living including, where relevant, 20 minute neighbourhoods and an infrastructure first approach.

The LDP delivery programme is expected to establish a deliverable housing land pipeline for the Local Housing Land Requirement. The purpose of the pipeline is to provide a transparent view of the phasing of housing allocations so that interventions, including infrastructure, that enable delivery can be planned: it is not to stage permissions. Representing when land will be brought forward, phasing is expected across the short (1-3 years), medium (4-6 years) and long-term (7-10 years). Where sites earlier in the deliverable housing land pipeline are not delivering as programmed, and alternative delivery mechanisms identified in the delivery programme are not practical, measures should be considered to enable earlier delivery of long-term deliverable sites (7-10 years) or areas identified for new homes beyond 10 years. The removal of site allocations should be considered where sites are no longer deliverable. The annual Housing Land Audit will monitor the delivery of housing land to inform the pipeline and the actions to be taken in the delivery programme.

The Highland Council Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) (2020) received a "Robust and Credible" assessment from the Centre for Housing Market Analysis on 8th February 2022. The Council HNDA (2020) provides estimates of future housing need and demand in Highland over the 5 years to 2024 and 10 years to 2029, based on looking at a range of evidence to inform projections on new household formation and the existing needs experienced by current households.

Specifically, the Council's HNDA estimates the additional housing units required through new build and changes to the existing housing stock and provides the evidence base to inform:

- The Council's Local Housing Strategy (LHS), and specifically targets for affordable housing supply to be met through annually updated Strategic Housing Investment Plans.
- The Highland Council Area Local Development Plans (LDP), and specifically the Housing Supply Target for overall new build provision.
- The Highland Strategic Commissioning Plan, which involves considering the need for specialist housing provision and related care and support services.
- The Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (CNP), which requires to set out an approach to meeting housing need within the Park.

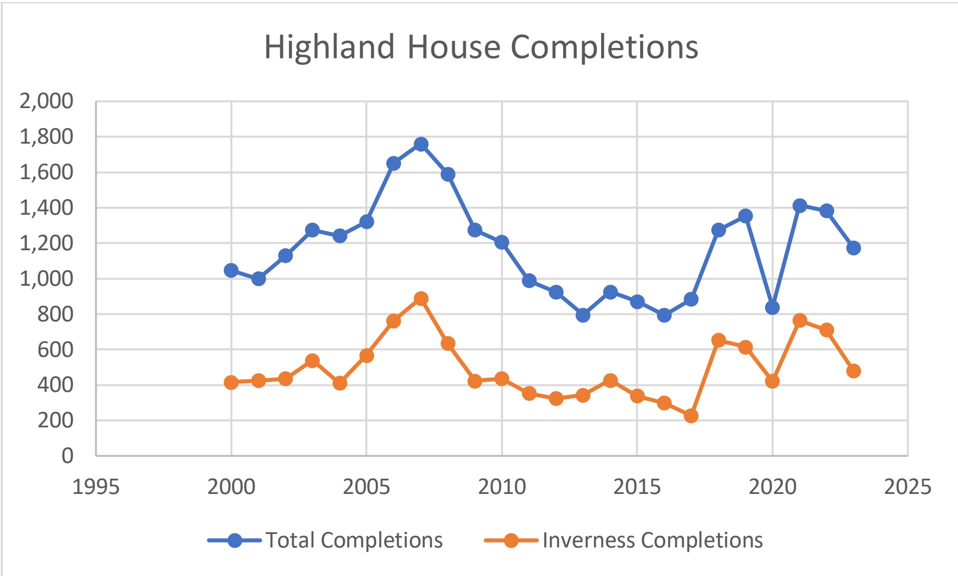
Following the adoption of NPF4, the Council HNDA 2020, whilst achieving Robust and Credible status only in February 2022, requires to be updated. As noted within the Economic & Employment Needs section above, the Council will consider as part of the HLDP development, utilising the English model of a Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) instead of the HNDA modelling, as this model makes adjustments for economic development and job creation in identifying Housing Land Requirements. Also, as noted in the Demographic section above, due to the timing of release of demographic and housing forecasts this work cannot be undertaken until later in the HLDP process.

c) <u>Housing Completion</u>

Highland housing needs sit within two broad categories, namely,

- **Urban living** – housing within our Settlement Development Areas (SDAs), such as the City of Inverness and our main towns and villages over 3000 population like Nairn, Fort William, Wick, Thurso etc. The majority of our existing housing stock (##percentage figure) is within this category; and
- **Rural Homes** - houses outwith the defined Settlement Development Areas.

Both types of housing numbers have been steadily growing for a number of years, with the total number of 28,113 homes being built across the Highlands between 2000 and 2024. Taking the total housing stock to 111,633 by 2022, a near 25% increase in 20-years – This growth is shown in the table below.



The graph also details that the majority of these homes (11,891 / 42%) were built within the Inverness Housing Market Area over the same period, with most of these homes being delivered by the volume house builders.

However, as outlined in the Highland Housing Challenge section above, the area needs to increase its housing supply, both within the urban and rural locales and will seek appropriate type, tenures and locations right across the region in relation to the evidence gathered for each of the area profiles.

d) <u>Local Housing Strategy</u>

The Council's Local Housing Strategy (LHS), approved in April 2023, was co-produced with LHS delivery partners, stakeholders and local residents. The LHS vision for Highland is that:

> *"Everyone in Highland has access to a quality home which is attainable, affordable and supports the local economy in a sustainable, connected community where people wish to live, work and study.''*

The LHS 2023-2028 builds on the progress of the 2017-22 LHS and sits at the heart of all housing planning arrangements and partnership activities in Highland. It is an ambitious strategy, setting out what homes and communities should look and feel like over the next five years.

As part of the evidence report, its vision and ambition will be reflected in the number, type, tenure and locations of housing allocations across the region.

e) <u>City & Town Centre Living:</u>

Housing and Economy

NPF4 Policy 27 requires the HLDP to provide a proportion of their housing requirements within city and town centres. Whilst the prevalent housing needs, requirements and tenure across Highland is semi-detached and detached plots, often set in (often rural) generous garden grounds, there has been several successful city and town centre living projects over recent years including:

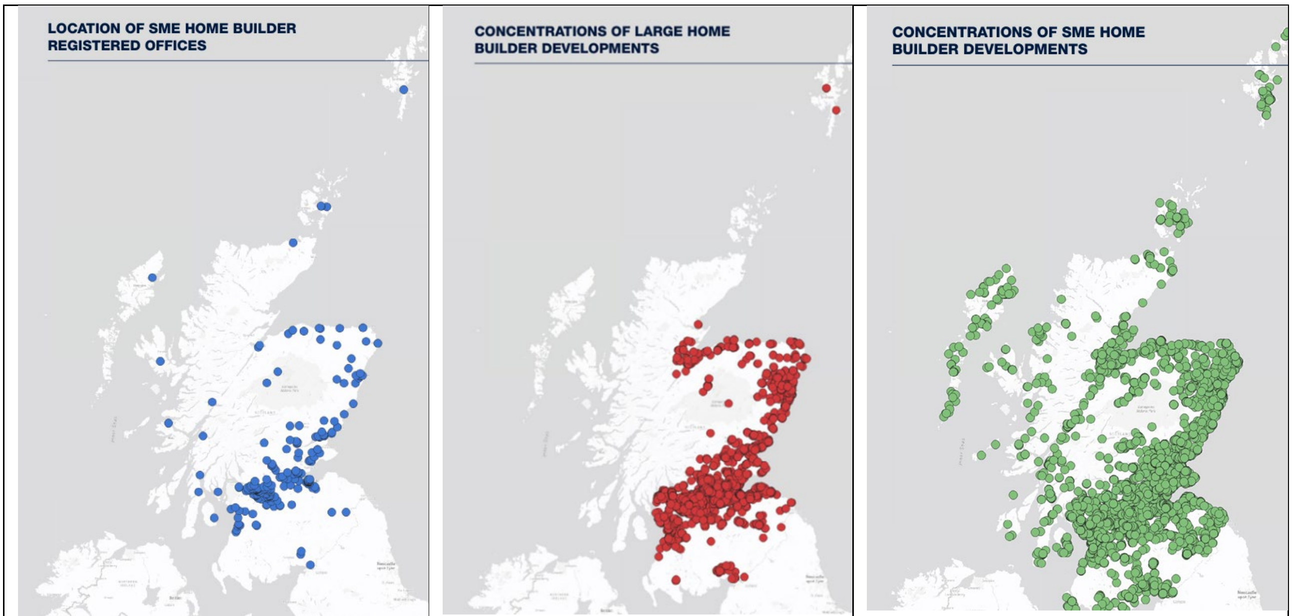
- 53no. units - Union Street, Inverness
- 7no. units- Castle Street, Inverness
- 10no. units - Glashan Court, Church Street, Inverness
- 12no. units – Castle Square, Nairn

The majority of these have been delivered by the Council and as part of the evidence gathering stage, work will be done to identify further developable sites and a review of existing planning policy to ensure a positive planning regime exists to support this form of housing.

The Council will also review and consider how best to bring back into use existing vacant spaces above commercial units across all localities, including again reviewing existing planning policy to ensure a positive planning regime exists to support this form of housing.

f) <u>Open Market Housing</u>

The majority of housing delivered across Highland is delivered by the volume house builders. However, the maps below demonstrate that these builders are located and primarily build in the more populated urban centres of Scotland, and across Highland this is focused around the Inner Moray Firth area. Housing provision away from theses area (again as shown on the maps below) is instead delivered by small and medium sized (SME) home builders, but this sector now account for less than 20% of new home sales per annum, whereas until 2017 SMEs typically accounted for 40% of sales. As part of the evidence gathering, the Council proposes to engage more widely with this sector and ascertain how the new HLDP can support and regrow this sector.



Source: Homes for Scotland; Scotland's SME Home Builders 2024: Data Review & Industry Insight

g) <u>Rural Housing & Crofting</u>

Given the rural nature of much of the Highlands, the Council within HwLDP has planning policies in relation to rural housing. These policies were designed to provide rural housing which safeguards, supports and sustains Highland rural communities and encourages people to live and work in healthy, high-quality environments. In addition, the Spatial Strategies within all the Council adopted area Local Development Plans accepted a degree of 'windfall housing' (housing built on sites not allocated for development), with the following rural housing numbers being approved over the last 10 years:

Area Local Development Plan	2004-2024 Rural Housing Approvals
WestPlan	##
CaSPlan	##
IMF	##

Housing to 2040 recognises the challenges and diversity of housing delivery in rural areas and it also recognises the significant and generational impact that a small number of additional homes can make to the long-term resilience of rural communities. The Rural and Islands Housing Action Plan includes a strong focus on community-led housing and highlights that in remote, rural and island areas, small-scale actions can bring about significant impacts.

Moving forward, in rural and island areas NPF4 Policy 16 recommend local authorities to set a locally established approach to rural housing which reflect locally specific market circumstances and delivery approaches. As outlined above, the Council proposes to review the existing suite of rural housing policies outlined in HwLDP, the Rural Housing Supplementary Guidance and NPF4, in light of the housing challenge declaration (HC/21/24), and develop planning policies which are supportive to rural housing throughout Highland, whilst safeguarding the rural landscape and creating resilient high quality sustainable communities.

h) Affordable Housing:

The Highland's Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), the Highland Housing Register and house completions data provides extensive evidence of the affordable housing demand and needs across Highlands and will be the primary evidence utilised in preparation of the HLDP. However, despite recent high levels of affordable housing completions (## number) there has been little impact on the backlog of unmet housing need across the region.

In addition, the Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme has set an ambitious target of delivering 110,000 affordable homes across Scotland by 2032 of which 70% will be for social rent and 10% in rural and island areas. Highland's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022–2027 (an updated version is currently in draft and will be presented to the Council Housing Committee in November) sets out a planned investment programme to deliver the Highland proportion (as detailed in the table below) of these and explains the various ways that the Council contributes to the delivery of affordable housing. The Council's Local Housing Strategy 2023–2028 was published too late to inform this plan, but it is proposed to take it into account in the preparation of the HLDP.

Housing Market Area (HMA)	Target % of Investment	Unit Approvals 5 years
Badenoch & Strathspey	8.8	308
Caithness*	2.9	102

East Ross	13.2	462
Inverness	35.3	1240
Lochaber	7.4	259
Mid Ross	13.2	462
Nairn	4.4	154
Wester Ross	5.9	206
Skye & Lochalsh	5.9	206
Sutherland	2.9	101
Highland	100	3500

NPF4 Policy 16: Quality Homes branch e) sets a requirement that '…development proposals for new homes will be supported where they make provision for affordable homes to meet an identified need. Proposals for market homes will only be supported where the contribution to the provision of affordable homes on a site will be at least 25% of the total number of homes, unless the LDP sets out locations or circumstances where:

i. a higher contribution is justified by evidence of need, or

ii. a lower contribution is justified, for example, by evidence of impact on viability, where proposals are small in scale, or to incentivise particular types of homes that are needed to diversify the supply, such as self-build or wheelchair accessible homes.

The above data notes that the majority of the affordable market demand is for properties within the City of Inverness. To meet this need, the Council within the new IMF2LDP increased the requirement for affordable housing within the City of Inverness Settlement Development Area (excepting land within the defined City Centre) for sites over 50 units to provide no less than 35% of the units as affordable housing. Across the entire plan area, this new LDP sets a threshold for 4 or more residential units, for a contribution towards affordable housing of generally no less than 25% of total provided units, which is what HwLDP Policy 32 (Affordable Housing) seeks. WestPlan outlines specific allocations within every larger settlement where an affordable housing requirement is required. The Council is also aware that there are certain areas where we struggle to fill the affordable housing due to a lack of demand, because the house is in the wrong location or the wrong size and/or type of property.

Therefore, as part of the evidence gathering, consideration of how the new City of Inverness policy, WestPlan allocations and the locations of affordable housing will need to be considered.

i) <u>Rental Property / Housing in Multiple Occupancy / Build-to-rent Housing / Student Accommodation & Temporary Workers Housing:</u>

The Council recognises that to have a successfully housing market all forms of housing tenure need to be provided for and that the private rented housing market, which includes Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), is an important element of the areas housing stock. It provides accommodation for those working and studying in the Highlands, who are unable to buy their own property. It is also recognised that this form of housing is helping to support economic growth of the area that HMO are in ready supply.

HwLDP has had a longstanding policy (Policy 33) on Houses in Multiple Occupation and the Council adopted Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Guidance in March 2013. This Supplementary Guidance HMO (HMOSG) includes a number of policies, with Policy HM01 requiring outwith Inverness City Centre, HMOs should not exceed 10% of housing stock within each census output area. Within Inverness City Centre HM02 notes that each HMO will be considered on its own merits. The policy goes on to note that if HMO numbers within the city centre reaches 10%, the guidelines will be reviewed. A review of the number of HMOs across Highland was conducted in May 2023 and it was agreed that at that time the HMOSG policy was operating as intended.

However, as part of the evidence report, it is proposed to review the impact on the total housing stock on a sub-region/area profile level, by reviewing the HMO licence approvals over a period of time, in order to determine the impact this sector has on the total housing stock.

	2022	2023	2024
HMO Licences	242	273	TBC

**Includes CNPA area*

Whilst Highlands have a number of higher and further educational establishments, Students housing demand is relatively limited due to a number of reasons. However, there is ambition to expand the higher and further educational offering, especially around the opportunities provided by the Inverness & Cromarty Green Freeport status. Therefore, as part of the evidence gathering, a review of the current provision will be undertaken along with discussions with the relevant educational establishments to determine any future requirements, over and above the current projections.

In terms of long-term rentals, there is anecdotal evidence that the demand for rental properties across both the urban and rural areas of Highland far outstrips the supply. Therefore, as part of the evidence report, the Council proposes to obtain the latest Landlord Registration data (2017 & 2019 data is shown below) and to reach out to rental companies to ascertain the issues, demand and limitations around the housing tenure.

	2017	2019	2024
Total Registered Landlord Properties	18,206	15,918	TBC

**Includes CNPA area*

A number of major energy infrastructure projects are expected across the region in the coming years and given the remote nature of a number of these projects, along with the opportunities of the Inverness & Cromarty Green Freeport status, a number of temporary workers sites will need to be identified. Whilst these sites may be temporary in nature, in reality, they will often be in place for a number of years; thereby resulting in a degree of permanence. Moreover, there is ongoing discussions over how some of these sites could provide 'legacy housing' following project completion.

Furthermore, given the large number of workers housed on these sites, without careful consideration on the locations the increase in population, albeit temporarily could overwhelm local shops and infrastructure and, as such there impacts need careful considered

j) Gypsy, Show people & Traveller

As outlined in Highland Council Local Housing Strategy 2023-28, the Council has a statutory duty to assess the housing and support needs of Gypsy / Travellers and to ensure that appropriate provision is made available. Highland Council owns and manages four Gypsy / Traveller sites (note. that one is located in Newtonmore and is excluded from the consideration of this paper due to its location within the CNPA LDP area).

- Longman Park, Inverness – Under redevelopment see below -
- Spean Park, Lochaber - 9 pitches
- Kentallen Park, Lochaber - 6 pitches

Many residents on these are long-term tenants and two of the sites have few vacancies and low turnover.

The Council is currently working in partnership with the Gypsy Traveller Community to improve the standard of Council site provision including the redesign of sites to ensure compliance with fire spacing legislation and other enhancements. Over £6.5m has been awarded to Highland Council from Scottish Government funding for improvement and building works on the Longman Park site for 2022/23-2024/25. This work includes capping areas of the site and laying roads and drainage, ahead of the installation 14 new permanent accommodation units, providing a mixture of two- and three-bedroom units. Three touring sites will also be created with utility cabins for visiting tenants. The project also includes the erection of a community building and site office.

In addition, in recent years, on average around 42 roadside encampments have been reported to the Council which is a reduction from historic trends and in line with the national profile. Encampments are generally small in scale, typically 3 caravans or less.

The Council will continue to work with the Gypsy Traveller Community to ensure their future needs are considered and identified, and if needed further improvements/expansion of currently facilities will be considered subject to funding and need.

k) <u>Existing Stock – Energy Performance/ ineffective stock empty homes/buildings at risk</u>

The 2023 Council Tax role shows Highlands has a total housing stock of just over 123,500 properties, Highland ineffective housing stock includes of 'Unoccupied', 'long term empty 'and 'second homes'

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Unoccupied	1,896	1,989	2,068	1,948	1,945		
Long-term Empty	1,538	1,855	2,098	2,595	2,768		
Second Homes	3,989	3,891	3,828	3,789	3,736		3,432
Total Ineffective	7,423	7,735	7,994	8,279	8,449		
Total Ineffective Stock Change in year		+312	+259	+285	+170		
Total Housing Stock	117,291	118,117	119,060	119,918	120,782	122,222	123,564
Total Housing Stock Change in year		+826	+943	+858	+864	+1,440	+1,342
Ineffective	6.33%	6.55%	6.71%	6.90%	7.00%		
Total House Completions	883	1,275	1,353	838	1,414	1,382	1,173

**Includes CNPA area*

Whilst the Highlands have an extensive number of existing residential units, it has been historically noted that many rural properties are generally less energy efficient than urban properties. In ensuring that the Council Housing Challenge and that an appropriate housing stock is provided the

Council will review the Energy Performance Certification (EPC) to understand where issues lie and then consider methods to address these through the housing land allocation.

The Council Climate & Energy Team are currently developing the Council Local heat and energy efficiency strategy and considering Local Heat Network. Both of which offer significant potential to improve the energy efficiency of the Highland housing stock, both issues are covered in detail within the Highland's Role in Decarbonisation And A Balanced Energy System Unique Challenge paper.

In considering the regions-built heritage at risk, the 'Buildings at Risk: Register for Scotland' Scottish Building at Risk records over 170 buildings, the majority of which are in private ownership. As part of the evidence review, these buildings will be reviewed to see if any enabling developments/allocations could be utilised to support the rehabilitation and reuse of these buildings.

l) <u>Tourism Accommodation</u>

The Highlands is a world-renowned area which attracted over 1.9million overnight trips by visitors in 2022[2], which generated over 7.3million overnight stays across the Highlands in 2022. Whilst these visitors and tourist industry, support around 25,000 jobs and bring significant economic benefits to Highland communities, the growth of the tourist market has also resulted in a number of challenges to the area as well.

In particular, the growth of short-term letting (STL), especially secondary letting of existing domestic properties has caused concern across many communities within the Highlands. The recent introduction of the Short-term Let Licensing Scheme by the Scottish Government has, for the first time allowed the Council to consider the issue in detail. With the Council's Short-term Let Licensing Public Register published on 21st August 2024 confirming the Council has received over 8150 STL licence applications, of which 5195 are related to the secondary letting of dwelling-houses and are broken down by type of unit as follows:

Type of Unit	Number of STL Licence Applications
Detached House	3143
Semi-detached House	770
Terraced House	302
Self-contained flat	980

**Includes CNPA area*

The Council has already established a Short-term Let Control Area across Ward 20 (Badenoch & Strathspey) in March 2024 and has adopted non-statutory planning policy with which to determine the applications the Control Area has generated. Additionally, the Council is also considering if further Control Areas are needed across the region and the data from the Short-term Let Licence Register will be utilised in this consideration.

Therefore, as part of the evidence gathering for each sub-region/area profile, the Council will review the locations of the licence applications against the available housing numbers (based on

[2] https://www.visitscotland.org/research-insights/regions/highlands

the Council Tax roll) and review the impacts the Ward 20 Control Area has had on housing availability, including a review of how effect the non-statutory planning policy has been.

Over and above the short-term let industry, the region has a large number of multiple-unit holiday accommodation offerings, these range from large hotel complexes, chalet developments, timeshare resorts, caravan sites (both touring and static) and camping and glamping units. These sites offer an important resource to the region and one which the Council is keen to support. Therefore, to better understand the number of sites, there locations and ambitions for future expansion, it is proposed to reach out to the main operators and trade bodies.

Beyond the recognised tourist sites, the region has several permanent residents living within static caravans, both within residential caravan parks and on single plots. To better understand the impact these units have on the locale, as part of the evidence report, the Council proposes to review the number and locations of these units.

The Scottish Government has committed to delivering more 'huts' across Scotland and this commitment is strengthened by NPF4 Policy 30 (Tourism) Branch d) which states '...Proposals for huts will be supported where the nature and scale of the development is compatible with the surrounding area and the proposal complies with relevant good practice guidance...'. In order to determine the needs for a bespoke LDP for Highlands, the Council will review the number of planning applications which have been submitted and there method of determination to confirm any deficiencies. In addition, the Council will engage with Reforesting Scotland (the lead hutting organisation) to seek any relevant evidence they may hold,

m) Second & Empty Homes

Often interlinked with the loss of housing stock to short-term letting, the growth of second homes has been an issue across the whole of Highland with the latest Council Tax data showing ### number of homes are lost to this sector, which represents approximately ##% of Highland total housing stock. The Council also agreed, on 14th December 2023, to fully exercise new Scottish Government legislation granting Councils discretionary powers to charge a premium of up to 100% on Council Tax for second homes. This had the effect of increasing the Council Tax charge for each banding to 200% from 1st April 2024.

The 'Corporate Revenue Budget Update - Financial Year 2024/25' report presented to the Corporate Resources Committee on the 11th September 2024, reported that:

> At the end of Q1, the number of 2nd homes/LTE originally registered for 2024/25 had reduced by 212 properties thus delivering the policy intent of increasing the supply of mainstream housing.
>
> This workstream has an income target for 2024/25 of £5.3m. At the end of Q1, performance was slightly ahead of target, with key enablers to deliver this saving such as completing annual billing, establishing weekly monitoring and initiating recovery of arrears all completed.
>
> At the time of reporting, further analysis of the 212 reductions in 2nd homes and LTEs indicates 19 of those billed have moved to NDR; 13% have been awarded Council Tax exemptions, e.g. agricultural. Most properties, 63.4% were returned to occupation as main residences and staff accommodation, thus delivering the policy intent.

Further review of the impacts of this new policy will be undertaken as part of the evidence report.

The Council has had an Empty Homes Officer in post for a number of years who provides free advice and assistance in bring properties back into use and the Council proposes to use the data from this work in order to further inform this aspect.

n) <u>Self & Custom Build & Community Housing:</u>

Self and custom build housing is defined as homes built or commissioned by individuals or groups of individuals for their own use. Homes built this way, offer a unique alternative to standard market housing and offer the opportunity to create innovative, greener and more affordable homes than currently offered through standard housing options. The ability for self-builders to make their homes more energy efficient, adopt more sustainable construction methods and materials, will also help the Council achieve its Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration

Highland rural areas have historically seen the greatest demand for, and the delivery of self & custom build plots. Conversely, Inverness City and Highland towns and villages have seen few self & custom build plots become available and those that do, are often sold quickly and at a high price. To address this, there is priority at a national level to increase self-build activity and NPF Policy 16 aims to open up more opportunities for this type of tenure in sustainable location.

To achieve this ambition, the Scottish Government in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, laid out in statute the requirement for each Planning Authority to "prepare and maintain" a list of people interested in self-build across its area. Highland Council opened its Self-Build Register in 2021 and currently has approximately 50 registered people and groups seeking self or custom build house sites.

Furthermore, **IMFLDP2 Policy 11 (Self and Custom Build Housing)** adopted in June 2024 brought in a requirement within urban areas, that at least 5% of the total residential units, on sites delivering 100 or more housing units are delivered as self or custom build plots.

The Council are also keen to understand the main drivers and other evidence that might be available and appropriate in relation to the self and custom build industry, and will look to the Communities Housing Trust, community organisations and the volume house builders to help us inform our position and determine if we need a LDP policy on this aspect.

o) <u>Later living, Accessible & Adaptable (Incl. Co-housing)</u>

As the Highland population ages (see the Demographic Section above), the type of property require will also change and the HLDP will need to ensure sufficient homes are provided which are accessible and adapted to the needs of the occupants.

IMFLDP2 Policy 13 (Accessible and Adaptable Homes) has already established the need for developers to provide 5% of dwellings to have a "wheelchair liveable" ground floor on developments over 50no. units. As part of the evidence gathering a review of the impact of this policy has had in its short adoption period, alongside discussions of the policy impacts with the volume housebuilding industry.

IMFLDP2 Policy 13 utilises the Scottish Homes 'Housing for Varying Needs' document to outline the precise requirements to make homes wheelchair liveable on the ground floor. A review of this document was subject to consultation by the Scottish Government in once published, the HLDP will need to review the implications of any updates.

Consultation Questions:

Question 1. Will the measures identified within the Highland Housing Challenge section be sufficient to support the economic growth forecasted? If not what other measures/mechanisms should the Council, consider?

Question 2. Has the Council identified the appropriate and relevant requirements and issues affecting housing delivery and housing need across the entire region? If not, what is missing?

Appendix 1 – Housing Need and Demand Study - Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport

1. Aligning Housing Supply Targets & Economic Growth Projections in Highland

In 2023, as part of delivering a new Local Housing Strategy, Highland Council developed 5-year Housing Supply Targets (HST) based on the methodology prescribed by the Housing Need & Demand Assessment Managers Guide (Scottish Government, 2020). Aligned to this guidance, HSTs were informed by the outcomes Highland Council Housing Need & Demand Assessment which was validated as robust and credible by the Scottish Government in December 2021. Housing Supply Targets set out the estimated level of additional housing that can be delivered on the ground (as opposed to estimated housing need) and should inform the definition of the Housing Land Requirements within the Local Development Planning framework.

The basis for setting Housing Supply Targets are HNDA estimates, which provide a statistical estimate of how much additional housing will be required to meet all future housing need and demand across the region. HSTs rely heavily on demographic projections to assess the extent of additional housing requirements associated with net household growth and are based on household projections from the National Register of Scotland (NRS). Household projections are trend-based and indicate the number of additional households that will form if recent demographic trends continue into the future. In Scotland, household projections are informed by population estimates, household composition profiles (derived from the Census and Scottish Household Survey) and dwelling estimates. Future headship rates are driven by assumptions on future levels of fertility, mortality, net migration, and household formation all informed by historic patterns of behaviour.

As HNDA estimates reply on historic trends as the basis for future housing requirements, they do not account for the impact of major economic or investment projects which support job creation and associated net migration into the Highland region. This includes the impact of proposals such as the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport (ICFGF), which has the potential to deliver a step change in high value added economic growth, skills, innovation, trade and investment, as well as playing a wider role in supporting decarbonisation. Initial analysis of the impact of the ICFGF proposal on the Highland economy suggests that up 10,000 jobs could be created over the next decade. The impact of this economic development is not reflected in existing Housing Supply Targets within the LHS or Housing Land Requirements within the LDP.

To create more credible future Housing Supply Targets which reflect the economic context of the region, Highland Council appointed Arneil Johnston in 2024 to recalibrate Housing Supply Targets to take into the account the economic impact assessment within the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport Business Case. To achieve this, it was agreed with Council officers that the report published by Iceni in November 2022 on *'Implications of East Midlands Freeport on Housing Need in NW Leicestershire'* should be used as a methodological basis. Whilst the Iceni analysis reflects the housing planning system in England, it offers the only example to date of aligning economic and housing growth assumptions to reflect the designation of Green Freeport status. Using this approach, the methodology developed for refreshing Highland's Housing Supply targets can be described as follows:

1. Estimate gross direct FTE's arising from economic impact analysis of Green Freeport proposal by spatial geography
2. Adjust for additionality impacts i.e. deadweight (existing jobs lost) or displacement (proposal taking jobs from existing economy) to establish net additional FTE jobs

3. Assess where the workforce is likely to originate from by spatial area to assess net housing requirements (i.e. number of new additional units required to accommodate in-migration of required workforce)
4. Assess the extent to which job estimates are already reflected in housing estimates arising from the statutory planning processes.

The methodology applied to derive recalibrated Housing Supply Targets therefore shifts away using demographic projections as the basis of forecasting future housing need towards the principles associated with the English framework where planning authorities produce a HENA (Housing and Economic Needs Assessment) to create future housing estimates aligned to economic forecasts. This approach will enable land-use planning and housing delivery strategies which reflect the economic development agenda for the Highland region.

This briefing paper details the methodology applied and outcomes associated with 10-year Highland Housing Supply Targets with reflect the ICGFG proposal. The Housing Supply Target covers all housing tenures and sets out the expected split between market and affordable housing.

1.1. Housing Supply Target Methodology

ICFGF Housing Supply Targets were established in a 7 stage process as follows:

1. Create a 10 year calculation model for setting Housing Supply Targets (HST) based on HNDA housing estimates adjusted for historic completion rates and ineffective housing stock
2. Assess newly arising need for housing based on economic impact analysis (direct jobs arising from the ICFGF) over the next 10 years
3. Determine the extent to which 2023 Housing Supply Targets may have already accounted for growth with the Housing Need & Demand Assessment process and eliminate double accounting
4. Agree where the projected ICFGF workforce will be drawn from to determine spatial areas with direct/indirect growth plus the extent to which the newly arising workforce will originate from existing households
5. Assess the tenure requirements arising from ICFGF job creation based on housing affordability analysis
6. Create revised 10-year housing estimates arising from projected ICFGF job creation forecasts
7. Benchmark 10-year HST to established land supply.

Stage 1: Create a 10 year Housing Supply Target Calculation

The requirement for additional housing in Highland (housing estimates) was generated by the 2021 HNDA. This includes housing estimates broken down into market housing (owner occupied + private rented sector) and affordable housing (social rent + below market rent). Within the HNDA, housing estimates have been further disaggregated into functional housing market sub-areas.

On this basis, agreed the following assumptions as the starting point for Housing Supply Targets should be based on 9,038 units (6,464 affordable housing + 2,574 market housing) as detailed in Table 1.1 below:

10-year totals of additional Need and Demand by Tenure and Housing Market Area 2019/20 to 2028/29 (for Local Development Plans) – Including In Year Need

Scenario 22 - 10 Year Totals 2019/20-2028/29											
High Migration HH Projection	Badenoch and Strathspey HMA (BS)	Caithness HMA (CA)	East Ross HMA (ER)	Inverness HMA (IN)	Lochaber HMA (LO)	Mid Ross HMA (MR)	Nairn HMA (NA)	Ross and Cromarty West HMA (RCW)	Skye and Lochalsh HMA (SL)	Sutherland HMA (SU)	HC Area Total
In Year Need	140	0	0	1390	110	60	60	20	160	0	1940
Social rent	309	158	246	2195	423	374	189	127	389	114	4523
Below Market	122	82	97	947	143	179	76	60	170	64	1939
PRS	83	28	83	545	90	201	66	59	162	43	1362
Buyers	65	117	77	505	107	149	44	37	56	57	1215
Total	579	385	503	4191	764	903	376	284	777	278	9039

Table 1.1: Highland 10-year HMA Housing Estimates (High Migration Scenario)

The methodology for producing the 2023 Housing Supply Targets agreed that Supply Targets should not assume market supply targets below the rate of historic completions (8,199), whilst the estimated need for affordable housing should be projected and maintained in an attempt to address the backlog of housing need in Highland communities.

Prior to the approval of the Inverness Cromarty Firth Green Freeport bid and associated business case development, initial assumptions on the impact of economic growth proposals were applied to produce adjusted market HSTs based on the proposals within the Inverness & Highland City Region Growth Deal, which creates a £315M investment framework for growing and developing the Highland economy. It was agreed that HSTs should be adjusted to reflect the impact of economic development policies on the scale of market housing requirements generally but specifically in the East Ross, Inverness and Mid Ross HMAs; aligned to the draft ICFGF proposal. Therefore to reflect the Council's ambition to enable growth and based on the economic development evidence, a 15% allowance was added to HSTs in each housing market sub-area, with the exception of the East Ross, Inverness and Mid Ross HMAs where a 30% allowance was added:

	Adjustment for economic growth	Economic Development Assumption
Badenoch & Strathspey	15%	HIE Business HNDA Studies: Key worker housing pressures
Caithness	15%	Economic growth enabled by unadjusted HST
East Ross	30%	Opportunity Cromarty Firth led housing growth
Inverness	30%	Opportunity Cromarty Firth led housing growth
Lochaber	15%	HIE Business HNDA Studies: Key worker housing pressures
Mid Ross	30%	Opportunity Cromarty Firth led housing growth
Nairn	15%	HIE Business HNDA Studies: Key worker housing pressures
West Ross	15%	Economic growth enabled by unadjusted HST
Skye & Lochalsh	15%	HIE Business HNDA Studies: Key worker housing pressures
Sutherland	15%	Economic growth enabled by unadjusted HST

Table 1.2: 2023 Adjusted Market HST assumptions to reflect economy led housing growth

Furthermore, it was suggested that market HSTs should also take into account the proportion of future house completions that will be 'lost' to the residential housing sector because they will become second homes, holiday or short term lets. To counter this, an allowance was added that reflects that current level of second homes in each housing market sub-area.

Applying the allowance for ineffective housing stock results in 326 units being added to market housing supply targets, whilst adding an allowance to reflect demand for housing arising from Highland's economic development strategy results in a further 1,975 units being added to the target. Overall, the adjusted housing market target sits at 10,500 units over the next 10 years (1,500 units per annum).

	Proposed HST Starting Point (10-year Housing Market Completions)	HMA % Market Tenure Estimates	Adjustment for ineffective stock (2nd Homes)	Alowance for ineffective stock	Adjustment for economic growth	Addition for economic growth	Adjusted Market housing target
Badenoch & Strathspey	471	5.7%	10.0%	47	15%	71	589
Caithness	462	5.6%	1.4%	6	15%	69	538
East Ross	510	6.2%	1.0%	5	30%	153	668
Inverness	3,345	40.8%	1.0%	33	30%	1,003	4,381
Lochaber	628	7.6%	4.3%	27	15%	94	749
Mid Ross	1,115	13.5%	9.0%	100	30%	334	1,550
Nairn	350	4.3%	1.9%	7	15%	53	410
West Ross	306	3.8%	8.9%	27	15%	46	379
Skye & Lochalsh	694	8.5%	7.1%	49	15%	104	848
Sutherland	319	3.9%	7.4%	24	15%	48	390
Highland	8,199	100.0%		326		1,975	10,500

Table 1.3: Adjusted Housing Supply Targets for Market Housing

Furthermore, Affordable Housing Supply Targets (6,464) have been adjusted to reflect housing pressure ratios and to ensure future delivery is programmed in the areas most in need of an increase in affordable provision. To ensure that affordable housing delivery is targeted to the Housing Market Sub-Areas where it will have most impact, an adjusted affordable HST has been created using a weighting which allocates affordable units based on HNDA affordable estimates (50%), affordable housing pressure ratios (25%) and economic growth activity aligned to the ICFGF proposal (25%). Table 1.6 details the weighting applied and HMA distribution of affordable HSTs:

	HNDA Affordable HST	Affordable HNDA Split: 50% Weighting	Adjustment for Housing Pressure: 25% Weighting	Housing Pressure Adjustment	Adjustment for Economic Growth: 25% Weighting	Economic Growth Adjustment	Total Adjusted Affordable HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	431	216	6%	385	0%	0	601
Caithness	240	120	1%	55	0%	0	175
East Ross	343	172	2%	124	8%	538	834
Inverness	3,142	1571	3%	167	8%	538	2277
Lochaber	566	283	3%	197	0%	0	480
Mid Ross	553	277	1%	73	8%	538	888
Nairn	265	133	2%	109	0%	0	241
West Ross	187	94	5%	304	0%	0	398
Skye & Lochalsh	559	280	2%	113	0%	0	392
Sutherland	178	89	1%	89	0%	0	178
Highland HST	6,464	3232	25%	1616	25%	1615	6,463

Table 1.4: Adjusted Housing Supply Targets for Affordable Housing

Combining both adjusted affordable and market housing HSTs, provides a total baseline Housing Supply Target for Highland of 16,964 units as follows:

	Total Adjusted Affordable HST	Proposed Market HST	Total HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	601	589	1,190
Caithness	175	538	713
East Ross	834	668	1,501
Inverness	2,277	4,381	6,658
Lochaber	480	749	1,228
Mid Ross	888	1,550	2,438
Nairn	241	410	651
West Ross	398	379	777
Skye & Lochalsh	392	848	1,240
Sutherland	178	390	568
Highland HST	6,463	10,500	16,964
% Tenure Split	38%	62%	100%

Table 1.5: Adjusted Housing Supply Targets for Market and Affordable Housing

In total, 38% of HST requirements are focused on the delivery of affordable housing with 62% on market housing delivery.

Stage 2: Assess Newly Arising Need for Housing based on ICFGF Impact Analysis

Whilst the 2023 baseline HST methodology makes high-level assumptions about the economic impact associated with the ICFGF proposal, in 2024, a detailed business case was developed providing economic projections of the number of direct full-time jobs to be created by Housing Market Area (HMA) over the next 10-years. These estimates assume a 10-year tax site designation and have been formed in discussion with tax site landowners. Using this analysis, it is assumed that 10,192 direct jobs will be created in the East Ross and Inverness Housing Market Areas (HMAs) as follows:

HMA	Gross direct FTE jobs, assuming a 10 year tax site designation
Badenoch & Strathspey	
Caithness	
East Ross	5,233
Inverness	4,959
Lochaber	
Mid Ross	
Nairn	
West Ross	
Skye & Lochalsh	
Sutherland	
Total Highlands and Islands	10,192

Table 1.5: Gross Direct FTE's associated with ICFGF Proposal, Source: Extract from ICFGF OBC Economic Case Analysis (Sept 2023)

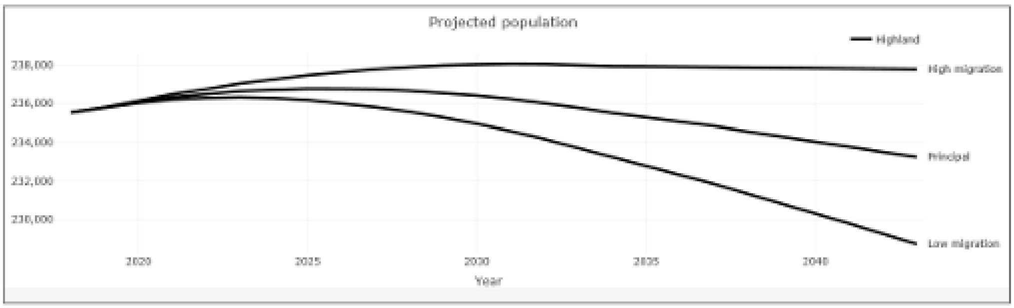
This analysis has therefore been utilised in the 2024 HST calculation as a more credible estimate of the likely newly arising need associated with ICFGF job creation over the next 10-years. It should be noted that these estimates reflect gross direct jobs and not the indirect employment opportunities that will be stimulated as a result of wider growth in the Highland economy arising as a result of the Green Free Port.

Stage 3: Eliminate Double Accounting arising from Economic Assumptions

Given that baseline Housing Supply Targets are derived from the 2021 HNDA assessment which assumes a high migration scenario as the basis for projecting newly arising housing need; further analysis was performed to assess the extent to which NRS projections may already take into account the inward migration of economically active households. More specifically, comparative analysis was performed to assess the projected rate of increase associated with the high migration scenario relative to historic household growth patterns.

Graph 1.1 from the Highland HNDA (December 2021) shows that the assumptions used by NRS in all three standard sets of projections (principal, low migration and high migration) project an initial increase in household numbers, with the Highland household population either falling or levelling off under all scenarios from 2030 onwards.

Figure 2-2 Comparison of Low/Principal and High Migration Population Projections



Source: https://scotland.shinyapps.io/nrs-sub-national-population-projections/

The high migration scenario of +1,100 people per year suggests an average growth of 790 households per year over the next decade, which compares with an average of 1,140 over the last 20 years. In finalising HNDA scenarios, the Highland Housing Market Partnership expressed concerns that whilst the high migration scenario is the NRS projection closest to the likely future growth of Highland, planning on this basis might result in a shortage of housing land that could constrain future economic growth.

Whilst the NRS High Migration scenario is selected as the basis of estimating newly arising need within the HNDA, inward migration is projected a rate which is just 69% of the actual migration into the Highland area over the last 2 decades. On this basis, it is proposed no adjustment is made to baseline ICFGF housing estimates as a result of targeted economic in-migration. Irrespective of the ICFGF proposal, concern was expressed by Housing Market Partners that HNDA housing estimates are likely to underestimate future new need for housing across the region.

Furthermore, Table 1.6 benchmarks 2023 HST assumptions against gross direct FTE’s (Stage 2) to show the gap associated with using a demographic versus an economic methodology as the basis of calculating newly arising need for housing across Highland. A gap of over 8,200 households is evident.

HMA	10-Year Market completions	Adjustment for Ineffective stock	Addition for ineffective stock	Adjustment for economic growth	Addition for economic growth	**Adjusted open market target**
Badenoch & Strathspey	471	10.0%	47	15%	71	**589**
Caithness	462	1.4%	6	15%	69	**538**
East Ross	510	1.0%	5	30%	153	**668**
Inverness	3345	1.0%	33	30%	1003	**4381**
Lochaber	628	4.3%	27	15%	94	**749**
Mid Ross	1115	9.0%	100	30%	334	**1550**
Nairn	350	1.9%	7	15%	53	**410**
West Ross	306	8.9%	27	15%	46	**379**
Skye & Lochalsh	694	7.1%	49	15%	104	**848**
Sutherland	319	7.4%	24	15%	48	**390**
Total Highlands and Islands	8199		326		1975	**10500**

HMA	Addition for economic growth	Gross direct FTE jobs, assuming a 10 year tax site designation	Gap: Economic vs Demographic Modelling
Badenoch & Strathspey	71	0	71
Caithness	69	0	69
East Ross	153	5233	-5080
Inverness	1003	4959	-3955
Lochaber	94	0	94
Mid Ross	334	0	334
Nairn	53	0	53
West Ross	46	0	46
Skye & Lochalsh	104	0	104
Sutherland	48	0	48
Total Highlands and Islands	1975	10192	-8216

Table 1.6: 2023 HST Assumptions on Economic Growth benchmarked to OBC Economic Impact Assessment

Stage 4: Agree spatial areas where the projected ICFGF workforce will be drawn from

To determine where the projected ICFGF workforce will be drawn from, further economic impact analysis was applied to assess the extent to which the newly arising workforce may be derived from the existing household base. This took the form of 'additionality analysis' to apply adjustments for deadweight, displacement, leakage, substitution and/or induced multiplier effects in the Highland economy. Adjusting for jobs which may be lost (deadweight) or displacement/substitution in the workforce from existing businesses, results in net direct FTE arising from the ICFGF proposal as follows:

HMA	Net additional FTE jobs at the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport level (45km boundary)
Badenoch & Strathspey	
Caithness	
East Ross	4,100
Inverness	4,327
Lochaber	
Mid Ross	
Nairn	
West Ross	
Skye & Lochalsh	
Sutherland	
Total Highlands and Islands	8,427

Table 1.7: Net Direct FTE's associated with ICFGF Proposal, Source: Extract from ICFGF OBC Economic Case Analysis (Sept 2023)

This analysis therefore suggests that over 8,400 'new' households will be required to absorb ICFGF jobs in the East Ross (4,100) and Inverness (4,327) HMAs to realise economic development opportunities. The economic impact analysis assumes that these households are not arising from the existing Highland workforce and will therefore require to migrate into the economy over the next 10 years to support ICFGF delivery.

Stage 5: Assess the tenure requirements arising from ICFGF job creation

To assess the nature of housing requirements associated with the 8,427 households who will absorb ICFGF jobs, housing affordability analysis was performed to assess the extent to which affordable or market housing tenures will be required. This assessment involved benchmarking indicative salary role grades arising from the ICFGF proposal to market entry level house prices in the East Ross and Inverness HMA's. Market entry level prices were derived from the 2022/23 Registers of Scotland dataset for each Housing Market Area in the Highland region.

A housing affordability model was developed based on the principles set out in the HNDA Practitioners Guide (2020). Using market entry level house prices, the gross household income required to access mortgage finance was established, assuming a loan to value ratio of 85%, and a mortgage multiplier of 3.2 times income (based on bank of England benchmarks and HNDA Guidance). The outcomes of this analysis show that in the East Ross HMA, a household income of £30,580 is required to achieve market entry (at £115,125); whilst in the Inverness HMA, a household income of £40,839 is required.

2022/23 All Sales (Registers of Scotland)	Market entry level house prices	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required
Badenoch & Strathspey	£184,500.00	£49,007.81
Caithness	£82,500.00	£21,914.06
East Ross	£115,125.00	£30,580.08
Inverness	£153,750.00	£40,839.84
Lochaber	£159,750.00	£42,433.59
Mid Ross	£138,500.00	£36,789.06
Nairn	£158,500.00	£42,101.56
West Ross	£165,000.00	£43,828.13
Skye & Lochalsh	£170,000.00	£45,156.25
Sutherland	£129,250.00	£34,332.03
Highland	£149,996.25	£39,842.75

Table 1.8: Market Entry House Prices and Gross Income required to meet Entry Point by HMA

To assess the proportion of ICFGF job roles that will enable housing market entry or require an affordable housing solution, further analysis from the OBC Business Case (September 2023) was extracted to profile the number of net FTE's by employment sector and Housing Market Area. For each employment sector, data from the Scottish Annual Business Sector was used to provide average annual incomes per employment sector and FTE forecasts. ICFGF incomes were then benchmarked against the minimum income required by HMA to secure market entry point as detailed in Table 1.9.

Tax sites in East Ross HMA*	Net additional FTE jobs at ICFGF level	Average annual income (2023/24) per gross, direct FTE	Can Afford Market Tenure in East Ross (£30,580)	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
Port services	14	£41,216	Yes	14	
Marshalling & Assembly	1185	£37,007	Yes	1185	
Fabrication & Manufacturing	2771	£45,483	Yes	2771	
Marine technology	92	£41,590	Yes	92	
Operations & Maintenance	61	£37,552	Yes	61	
Hydrogen	149	£43,159	Yes	149	
Training	8	£36,792	Yes	8	
Life sciences	0	£44,527	Yes	0	
Spirits	14	£48,808	Yes	14	
Warehousing	15	£38,662	Yes	15	
Hotel accommodation	18	£23,428	No		18
Business administration	0	£34,828	Yes		
All sectors	**4327**	**£42,751**		**4309**	**18**
			% FTE job roles who can afford each tenure	**99.6%**	**0.4%**

Tax sites in Inverness HMA*	Net additional FTE jobs at ICFGF level	Average annual income (2023/24) per gross, direct FTE	Can Afford Market Tenure in Inverness (£40,839)	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
Port services	219	£41,216	Yes	219	
Marshalling & Assembly	413	£37,007	No		413
Fabrication & Manufacturing	2212	£45,483	Yes	2212	
Marine technology	33	£41,590	Yes	33	
Operations & Maintenance	117	£37,552	No		117
Hydrogen	132	£43,159	Yes	132	
Training	18	£36,792	No		18
Life sciences	907	£44,527	Yes	907	
Spirits	0	£48,808	Yes		
Warehousing	0	£38,662	No		
Hotel accommodation	0	£23,428	No		
Business administration	47	£34,828	No		47
All sectors	**4100**	**£43,694**		**3504**	**596**
			% FTE job roles who can afford each tenure	**85.5%**	**14.5%**

Table 1.9: Number/% of FTE Job Roles who can afford Market/Affordable Tenure

Overall based on a mortgage affordability calculation for forecast ICFGF job roles by sector, 93% of all housing requirements could be met by market entry level housing solutions (7,813 homes), with just 7% of forecast job roles necessitating affordable housing (614).

HMA	Net additional FTE jobs at ICFGF level	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
East Ross	4327	4309	18
Inverness	4100	3504	596
Total Housing Requirement	8427	7813	614
% Housing Requirement	100%	93%	7%

Table 1.10: Number/% of FTE Job Roles who can afford Market/Affordable Tenure by HMA

It should be noted that meeting housing need based on these assumptions will be contingent on securing market delivery responses in quartiles 1-2 of the market. Further analysis which considers the margin between market entry and median level housing as affordable price points should perhaps be considered in the context of housing delivery planning, as should the role of workforce housing models based on low cost home ownership or intermediate rent models.

Stage 6: Create revised 10-year housing estimates arising from ICFGF forecasts

Informed by the outputs associated with stages 4-5, the 10-year baseline HST projection model is then updated to reflect the housing requirements arising from the ICFGF Business case by housing tenure.

For market housing requirements, the estimated economic growth impacts in the baseline HST calculation are replaced by the 7,813 households/FTEs forecast to require market housing as a result of the ICFGF economic impact analysis. Equally, 614 households/FTEs arising from the ICFGF business case who require affordable housing are added to baseline affordable Housing Supply Targets.

HMA - Market requirement	Market Housing HST starting point (10-year completions)	Addition for ineffective stock	Addition for economic growth	ICFGF Adjusted Market HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	471	47	71	589
Caithness	462	6	69	538
East Ross	510	5	4309	4824
Inverness	3345	33	3504	6882
Lochaber	628	27	94	749
Mid Ross	1115	100	334	1550
Nairn	350	7	53	410
West Ross	306	27	46	379
Skye & Lochalsh	694	49	104	848
Sutherland	319	24	48	390
	8199	326	8632	17157

10-Year HST Targets by HMA	ICFGF Adjusted Affordable HST	ICFGF Adjusted Market HST	Total HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	601	589	1,190
Caithness	175	538	713
East Ross	852	4,824	5,675
Inverness	2,873	6,882	9,755
Lochaber	480	749	1,228
Mid Ross	888	1,550	2,438
Nairn	241	410	651
West Ross	398	379	777
Skye & Lochalsh	392	848	1,240
Sutherland	178	390	568
Highland HST	7,078	17,157	24,235
% Tenure Split	29%	71%	100%

Table 1.11: ICFGF adjusted 10-year Housing Supply Targets by Tenure and HMA

Aligning the assessed economic impact of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport proposal into the baseline Housing Supply Target methodology, shifts projected housing requirements from 16,964 units in the next 10-years to 24,235, an increase of 43%.

Given the forecast income levels associated with ICFGF salaries, the majority of these requirements (71%) are for market housing, with 29% necessitating the delivery of affordable housing.

Stage 7: Benchmarking 10-year HST to established land supply

The final aspect of the analysis tested the delivery potential of ICFGF Housing Supply Targets by housing market sub-area. Table 1.12 details the evidence considered including HSTs by HMA and established land supply as published within the Housing Land Audit 2023.

	ICFGF 10-Year Housing Supply Targets	5 Year Effective Land Supply (2023/24 - 2027/28)	5 Year supply 2028/29 - 2033/34	10 Year Land Supply
Badenoch & Strathspey	1,190	401	204	605
Caithness	713	47	25	72
East Ross	5,449	538	575	1,113
Inverness	9,982	2,064	2,131	4,195
Lochaber	1,228	337	99	436
Mid Ross	2,438	628	248	876
Nairn	651	260	81	341
West Ross	777	90	29	119
Skye & Lochalsh	1,240	281	256	537
Sutherland	568	305	78	383
Highland	24,235	4,951	3,726	8,677

	Adjusted 10-Year Housing Supply targets	10 Year Established Land Supply	Shortfall/surplus: 10-year established land supply
Badenoch & Strathspey	1,190	605	-585
Caithness	713	72	-641
East Ross	5,449	1,113	-4,336
Inverness	9,982	4,195	-5,787
Lochaber	1,228	436	-792
Mid Ross	2,438	876	-1,562
Nairn	651	341	-310
West Ross	777	119	-658
Skye & Lochalsh	1,240	537	-703
Sutherland	568	383	-185
Highland	24,235	8,677	-15,558

Table 1.12: Analysis of Adjusted Housing Supply Estimates by Housing Market Sub-area

Table 1.12 suggests that at a global level, 10-year ICFGF Housing Supply Targets cannot be met by the current 10-year land supply (2023/24 – 2033/34). An overall shortfall of 15,558 units is identified relative to the delivery of the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport proposal. Given the scale of ICFGF impact on housing requirements, notable shortfalls are evident in the East Ross (4,336 units) and Inverness HMAs (4,195).

This analysis clearly illustrates the impact of using demographic projections as the basis of land-use planning versus an economic impact approach. However, using statutory processes, baseline Housing Supply Targets (16,964) still cannot be met by the current 10-year land supply in Highland (8,677) with a shortfall of 8,287 units evidenced.

This analysis therefore suggests that current identified land supply is not sufficient to meet 10-year Housing Supply Targets using the Council's agreed methodology. If the economic impact of the ICFGF proposal is considered, a shortfall of over 15,500 units is identified. Without strategic intervention to align housing land allocations to major economic development proposals, the risk to growing the Highland economy is evident.

Step 1: Proposed starting point for HST

10-Year HST Targets	2019/20-2028/29	% Tenure Split
Affordable Housing	6,464	38%
Market Housing	10,500	62%
	16,964	100%

10-Year HST Targets by HMA	Total Adjusted Affordable HST	Proposed Market HST	Total HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	601	589	1,190
Caithness	175	538	713
East Ross	834	668	1,501
Inverness	2,277	4,381	6,658
Lochaber	480	749	1,228
Mid Ross	888	1,550	2,438
Nairn	241	410	651
West Ross	398	379	777
Skye & Lochalsh	392	848	1,240
Sutherland	178	390	568
Highland HST	6,463	10,500	16,964
% Tenure Split	38%	62%	100%

Step 2: Gross Direct Impact of ICFGF on FTE's by HMA

HMA	Gross direct FTE jobs, assuming a 10 year tax site designation
Badenoch & Strathspey	0
Caithness	0
East Ross	5,233
Inverness	4,959
Lochaber	0
Mid Ross	0
Nairn	0
West Ross	0
Skye & Lochalsh	0
Sutherland	0
Total Highlands and Islands	10,192

Step 3: Implicit Economic Growth in Adjusted HSTs

HMA	Addition for economic growth	Gross direct FTE jobs, assuming a 10 year tax site designation	Gap: Economic vs Demographic Modelling
Badenoch & Strathspey	71	0	71
Caithness	69	0	69
East Ross	153	5233	-5080
Inverness	1003	4959	-3955
Lochaber	94	0	94
Mid Ross	334	0	334
Nairn	53	0	53
West Ross	46	0	46
Skye & Lochalsh	104	0	104
Sutherland	48	0	48
Total Highlands and Islands	1975	10192	-8216

*HST calculation underestimates housing requirements arising from economic growth by 8,200

Step 4: Net additonal FTE's arising from ICFGF by HMA

HMA	Net additional FTE jobs at the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport level (45km boundary)
Badenoch & Strathspey	
Caithness	
East Ross	4,100
Inverness	4,327
Lochaber	
Mid Ross	
Nairn	
West Ross	
Skye & Lochalsh	
Sutherland	
Total Highlands and Islands	8,427

HMA	Market Housing Addition for economic growth	Net additional FTE jobs at the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport level (45km boundary)	Economic Growth assumption adjusted for ICFGF Net Additional Jobs
Badenoch & Strathspey	71	0	71
Caithness	69	0	69
East Ross	153	4100	4100
Inverness	1003	4327	4327
Lochaber	94	0	94
Mid Ross	334	0	334
Nairn	53	0	53
West Ross	46	0	46
Skye & Lochalsh	104	0	104
Sutherland	48	0	48
Total Highlands and Islands	1975	8427	9246

Step 5: Net additonal FTE's arising from ICFGF by HMA and Housing Tenure

HMA	Net additional FTE jobs at ICFGF level	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
East Ross	4327	4309	18
Inverness	4100	3504	596
Total Housing Requirement	8427	7813	614
% Housing Requirement	100%	93%	7%

Step 6: Revised HSTs adjusted for NET additonal ICFGF FTEs

HMA - Market requirement	Market Housing HST starting point (10-year completions)	Addition for ineffective stock	Addition for economic growth	ICFGF Adjusted Market HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	471	47	71	589
Caithness	462	6	69	538
East Ross	510	5	4309	4824
Inverness	3345	33	3504	6882
Lochaber	628	27	94	749
Mid Ross	1115	100	334	1550
Nairn	350	7	53	410
West Ross	306	27	46	379
Skye & Lochalsh	694	49	104	848
Sutherland	319	24	48	390
	8199	326	8632	17157

10-Year HST Targets by HMA	ICFGF Adjusted Affordable HST	ICFGF Adjusted Market HST	Total HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	601	589	1,190
Caithness	175	538	713
East Ross	852	4,824	5,675
Inverness	2,873	6,882	9,755
Lochaber	480	749	1,228
Mid Ross	888	1,550	2,438
Nairn	241	410	651
West Ross	398	379	777
Skye & Lochalsh	392	848	1,240
Sutherland	178	390	568
Highland HST	7,078	17,157	24,235
% Tenure Split	29%	71%	100%

Step 7: Benchmarking 10-Year HSTs to Established Land Supply

	Adjusted 10-Year Housing Supply targets	10 Year Established Land Supply	Shortfall/surplus: 10-year established land supply
Badenoch & Strathspey	1,190	605	-585
Caithness	713	72	-641
East Ross	5,449	1,113	-4,336
Inverness	9,982	4,195	-5,787
Lochaber	1,228	436	-792
Mid Ross	2,438	876	-1,562
Nairn	651	341	-310
West Ross	777	119	-658
Skye & Lochalsh	1,240	537	-703
Sutherland	568	383	-185
Highland	24,235	8,677	-15,558

	Baseline 10-Year Housing Supply targets	10 Year Established Land Supply	Shortfall/surplus: 10-year established land supply
Badenoch & Strathspey	1,190	605	-585
Caithness	713	72	-641
East Ross	1,501	1,113	-388
Inverness	6,658	4,195	-2,463
Lochaber	1,228	436	-792
Mid Ross	2,438	876	-1,562
Nairn	651	341	-310
West Ross	777	119	-658
Skye & Lochalsh	1,240	537	-703
Sutherland	568	383	-185
Highland	16,964	8,677	-8,287

Step 1: Adjusted HNDA Housing Estimates - 10-Year Total	HNDA baseline = Market requirement 10-Year Total	HNDA toolkit HMA split	SG Completion figures 2013/14-2022/23	Second homes & empty homes							
HMA	HNDA Market+PRS	HMA %	Addition to match 10 year completions	Adjustment for Ineffective stock	Addition for ineffective stock	Adjustment for economic growth	Addition for economic growth	**Adjusted open market target**			
B & S	148	5.75%	471	10.0%	47	15%	71	**589**	Lochaber, Badenoch, Skye - Business Housing Needs Assessment		
Caithness	145	5.63%	462	1.4%	6	15%	69	**538**	Offshire wind proposals		
East Ross	160	6.22%	510	1.0%	5	30%	153	**668**	**Opportunity Cromarty Firth**	15000 new jobs over 10 years	
Inverness	1050	40.79%	3345	1.0%	33	30%	1003	**4381**		3750	First 5 years pipeline from Cromarty Firth = 25%
Lochaber	197	7.65%	628	4.3%	27	15%	94	**749**			
Mid Ross	350	13.60%	1115	9.0%	100	30%	334	**1550**			
Nairn	110	4.27%	350	1.9%	7	15%	53	**410**			
West Ross	96	3.73%	306	8.9%	27	15%	46	**379**	Hospitality pressures		
S & L	218	8.47%	694	7.1%	49	15%	104	**848**			
Sutherland	100	3.89%	319	7.4%	24	15%	48	**390**	Spaceport/wildlands		
	2574	100.00%	8199		326		1975	**10500**			

HMA	Social Rent Requirement: 10-Year Total	Below Market Rent: Requirement: 10-Year Total	Adjusted Market Housing Requirement: 10-Year Total	Adjusted Housing Requirement: 10-Year Total
B & S	309	122	589	1.020
Caithness	158	82	538	778
East Ross	246	97	668	1.011
Inverness	2.195	947	4.381	7.523
Lochaber	423	143	749	1.315
Mid Ross	374	179	1.550	2.103
Nairn	189	76	410	675
West Ross	127	60	379	566
S & L	389	170	848	1.407
Sutherland	114	64	390	568
	4.524	1.940	10.500	16.964
	26.67%	11.44%	61.90%	100.00%
	Affordable requirement	6,464		

Housing Market Area	2021/22 Lets	1st Choice Applicants	Pressure ratio
Badenoch & Strathspey	47	719	15.3
Caithness	285	622	2.2
Inverness	713	3507	4.9
Lochaber	173	1151	6.7
Nairn	55	430	7.8
East Ross	294	856	2.9
Mid Ross	215	930	4.3
West Ross	22	266	12.1
Skye & Lochalsh	132	592	4.5
Sutherland	97	342	3.5
Highland	2033	9416	4.6
Table 1.5: Affordable Housing Pressure ratios by HMA			64.2

	HNDA Affordable HST	Proposed Market HST	Total HST	Affordable HNDA Split: 50% Weighting	Adjustment for Housing Pressure: 25% Weighting	Housing Pressure Adjustment	Adjustment for Economic Growth: 25% Weighting	Economic Growth Adjustment	Total Adjusted Affordable HST	Adjusted Affordable HST HMA %	HNDA Affordable HST HMA %
Badenoch & Strathspey	431	589	1.020	216	6.0%	385	0.00%	0	601	9%	7%
Caithness	240	538	778	120	0.8%	55	0.00%	0	175	3%	4%
East Ross	343	668	1.011	172	1.9%	124	8.33%	538	834	13%	5%
Inverness	3.142	4.381	7.523	1571	2.6%	167	8.33%	538	2277	35%	49%
Lochaber	566	749	1.315	283	3.0%	197	0.00%	0	480	7%	9%
Mid Ross	553	1.550	2.103	277	1.1%	73	8.33%	538	888	14%	9%
Nairn	265	410	675	133	1.7%	109	0.00%	0	241	4%	4%
West Ross	187	379	566	94	4.7%	304	0.00%	0	398	6%	3%
Skye & Lochalsh	559	848	1.407	280	1.7%	113	0.00%	0	392	6%	9%
Sutherland	178	390	568	89	1.4%	89	0.00%	0	178	3%	3%
Highland HST	6.464	10.500	16.964	3232	25%	1616	25%	1615	6.463	100%	100%
% Tenure Split	38%	62%	100%								
10-year completions	2.806	8.199	11.005								
% increase in historic completions	130%	28%	54%								

Step 1: Proposed starting point for HST		
HNDA Housing Estimates	2019/20-2028/29	% Tenure Split
Affordable Housing	6.464	38%
Market Housing	10.500	62%
	16964	

	Total Adjusted Affordable HST	Proposed Market HST	Total HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	601	589	1.190
Caithness	175	538	713
East Ross	834	668	1.501
Inverness	2.277	4.381	6.658
Lochaber	480	749	1.228
Mid Ross	888	1.550	2.438
Nairn	241	410	651
West Ross	398	379	777
Skye & Lochalsh	392	848	1.240
Sutherland	178	390	568
Highland HST	6.463	10.500	16.964
% Tenure Split	38%	62%	100%
10-year completions	2.806	8.199	11.005
% increase in historic completions	130%	28%	% HNDA estimates

SPECIAL DATA EXTRACT FROM INVERNESS AND CROMARTY FIRTH OBC ECONOMIC CASE ANALYSIS (SEPTEMBER 2023)
CWA, 14/3/24

Broad sector	Gross FTE jobs, assuming a 10 year tax site designation Source: Discussions with tax site landowners	Average annual income (2023/24 prices) per gross, direct FTE Source: ICFGF OBC Economic Case. Based on assumed SIC (Division) blends per Broad Sector. Jobs by SIC Division adjusted for FTEs using FT/PT data from NOMIS. Incomes from SABS 2021, adjusted to 2023/24 prices using GDP deflator (June 2023 release)
Tax sites in Inverness HMA*		
Port services	265	£41,216
Marshalling & Assembly	500	£37,007
Fabrication & Manufacturing	2675	£45,483
Marine technology	40	£41,590
Operations & Maintenance	142	£37,552
Hydrogen	160	£43,159
Training	22	£36,792
Life sciences	1098	£44,527
Spirits	0	£48,808
Warehousing	0	£38,662
Hotel accommodation	0	£23,428
Business administration	57	£34,828
All sectors	**4959**	**£43,694**
Tax sites in East Ross HMA*		
Port services	17	£41,216
Marshalling & Assembly	1433	£37,007
Fabrication & Manufacturing	3351	£45,483
Marine technology	111	£41,590
Operations & Maintenance	74	£37,552
Hydrogen	180	£43,159
Training	10	£36,792
Life sciences	0	£44,527
Spirits	17	£48,808
Warehousing	18	£38,662
Hotel accommodation	22	£23,428
Business administration	0	£34,828
All sectors	**5233**	**£42,751**
All tax sites	**10192**	

HMA	Gross direct FTE jobs, assuming a 10 year tax site designation
Badenoch & Strathspey	
Caithness	
East Ross	5,233
Inverness	4,959
Lochaber	
Mid Ross	
Nairn	
West Ross	
Skye & Lochalsh	
Sutherland	
Total Highlands and Islands	10,192

* Note: tax sites as at initial OBC submission in September 2023. Any changes to tax site designation since then are not taken account in the above analysis

Is households growth through inward migration already reflected in HNDA Housing estimates?

THC HNDA3 (Page 77)

Sections 2.5 and 2.6 show that the assumptions used by NRS in their three standard sets of projections (principal, low migration and high migration) all continue to rise initially however the population is either falling or level in all cases from 2030. The high migration scenario of +1,100 people per year suggests an average growth of 790 households per year over the next decade which compares with an average of 1,140 over the last 20 years. The HMP has raised concerns that, although the high migration scenario is the NRS projections that is closest to the likely future growth of Highland, planning on this basis might result in a shortage of housing land that would constrain future economic growth.

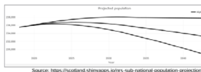
Whilst the High Migration scenario has been selected as the basis of estimating newly arising need, inward migration is projected a rate which is just 69% of the actual migration into the Highland area over the last 2 decades. On this basis, it is proposed no adjustment is made to baseline ICFGF housing estimates as a result of targeted economic in-migration.

Adjusted Market HST including Economic Growth Assumption

HMA	10-Year Market completions	Adjustment for Ineffective stock	Addition for ineffective stock	Adjustment for economic growth	Addition for economic growth	**Adjusted open market target**
Badenoch & Strathspey	471	10.0%	47	15%	71	**589**
Caithness	462	1.4%	6	15%	69	**538**
East Ross	510	1.0%	5	30%	153	**668**
Inverness	3345	1.0%	33	30%	1003	**4381**
Lochaber	628	4.3%	27	15%	94	**749**
Mid Ross	1115	9.0%	100	30%	334	**1550**
Nairn	350	1.9%	7	15%	53	**410**
West Ross	306	8.9%	27	15%	46	**379**
Skye & Lochalsh	694	7.1%	49	15%	104	**848**
Sutherland	319	7.4%	24	15%	48	**390**
Total Highlands and Islands	8199		326		1975	**10500**

HMA	Addition for economic growth	Gross direct FTE jobs, assuming a 10 year tax site designation	Gap: Economic vs Demographic Modelling
Badenoch & Strathspey	71	0	71
Caithness	69	0	69
East Ross	153	5233	-5080
Inverness	1003	4959	-3955
Lochaber	94	0	94
Mid Ross	334	0	334
Nairn	53	0	53
West Ross	46	0	46
Skye & Lochalsh	104	0	104
Sutherland	48	0	48
Total Highlands and Islands	1975	10192	-8216

Figure 2-2 Comparison of Low/Principal and High Migration Population Projections

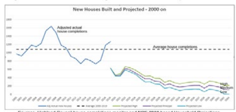


Source: https://scotland.shinyapps.io/nrs-sub-national-population-projections/

Table 2-3 Historic Net Migration to Highland

Year	Net Migration
2011/2	+120
2012/3	+90
2013/4	+240
2014/5	+1120
2015/6	+1200
2016/7	+810
2017/8	+970
2018/9	+980

Figure 2-4 Historic House Building and NRS Household Projections, 2000 on



Sources: Highland Council house completions monitor and NRS 2018 based Household Projections

SPECIAL DATA EXTRACT FROM INVERNESS AND CROMARTY FIRTH OBC ECONOMIC CASE ANALYSIS (SEPTEMBER 2023)
CWA, 14/3/24

Broad sector	**Gross FTE jobs, assuming a 10 year tax site designation** **Source: Discussions with tax site landowners**	**Net additional FTE jobs at the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport level (45km boundary)** **Source: ICFGF OBC Economic Case, after adjustments for deadweight, displacement, leakage, substitution and indirect and induced multiplier effects**	**Net additional FTE jobs at the Highlands and Islands level** **Source: ICFGF OBC Economic Case, after adjustments for deadweight, displacement, leakage, substitution and indirect and induced multiplier effects**	**Average annual income (2023/24 prices) per gross, direct FTE** **Source: ICFGF OBC Economic Case. Based on assumed SIC (Division) blends per Broad Sector. Jobs by SIC Division adjusted for FTEs using FT/PT data from NOMIS. Incomes from SABS 2021, adjusted to 2023/24 prices using GDP deflator (June 2023 release)**	
Tax sites in Inverness HMA*					
Port services	265	219		£41,216	5%
Marshalling & Assembly	500	413		£37,007	10%
Fabrication & Manufacturing	2675	2212		£45,483	54%
Marine technology	40	33		£41,590	1%
Operations & Maintenance	142	117		£37,552	3%
Hydrogen	160	132		£43,159	3%
Training	22	18		£36,792	0%
Life sciences	1098	907		£44,527	22%
Spirits	0	0		£48,808	0%
Warehousing	0	0		£38,662	0%
Hotel accommodation	0	0		£23,428	0%
Business administration	57	47		£34,828	1%
All sectors	**4959**	**4100**	**4139**	**£43,694**	100%
Tax sites in East Ross HMA*					
Port services	17	14		£41,216	0%
Marshalling & Assembly	1433	1185		£37,007	27%
Fabrication & Manufacturing	3351	2771		£45,483	64%
Marine technology	111	92		£41,590	2%
Operations & Maintenance	74	61		£37,552	1%
Hydrogen	180	149		£43,159	3%
Training	10	8		£36,792	0%
Life sciences	0	0		£44,527	0%
Spirits	17	14		£48,808	0%
Warehousing	18	15		£38,662	0%
Hotel accommodation	22	18		£23,428	0%
Business administration	0	0		£34,828	0%
All sectors	**5233**	**4327**	**4369**	**£42,751**	100%
All tax sites	**10192**	**8427**	**8508**		

* Note: tax sites as at initial OBC submission in September 2023. Any changes to tax site designation since then are not taken account in the above analysis

HMA	Net additional FTE jobs at the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport level (45km boundary)
Badenoch & Strathspey	
Caithness	
East Ross	4,327
Inverness	4,100
Lochaber	
Mid Ross	
Nairn	
West Ross	
Skye & Lochalsh	
Sutherland	
Total Highlands and Islands	8,427

SPECIAL DATA EXTRACT FROM INVERNESS AND CROMARTY FIRTH OBC ECONOMIC CASE ANALYSIS (SEPTEMBER 2023)
CWA, 14/3/24

Broad sector	**Net additional FTE jobs at the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport level (45km boundary)** **Source: ICFGF OBC Economic Case, after adjustments for deadweight, displacement, leakage, substitution and indirect and induced multiplier effects**	**Average annual income (2023/24 prices) per gross, direct FTE** **Source: ICFGF OBC Economic Case. Based on assumed SIC (Division) blends per Broad Sector. Jobs by SIC Division adjusted for FTEs using FT/PT data from NOMIS. Incomes from SABS 2021, adjusted to 2023/24 prices using GDP deflator (June 2023 release)**				
Tax sites in Inverness HMA*			% Net Additional FTEs	Can't Afford Market Tenure in Inverness	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
Port services	219	£41,216	5%	Yes	219	
Marshalling & Assembly	413	£37,007	10%	No		413
Fabrication & Manufacturing	2212	£45,483	54%	Yes	2212	
Marine technology	33	£41,590	1%	Yes	33	
Operations & Maintenance	117	£37,552	3%	No		117
Hydrogen	132	£43,159	3%	Yes	132	
Training	18	£36,792	0%	No		18
Life sciences	907	£44,527	22%	Yes	907	
Spirits	0	£48,808	0%	Yes		
Warehousing	0	£38,662	0%	No		
Hotel accommodation	0	£23,428	0%	No		
Business administration	47	£34,828	1%	No		47
All sectors	**4100**	**£43,694**	100%		3504	596
					85.5%	14.5%
Tax sites in East Ross HMA*			% Net Additional FTEs	Can't Afford Market Tenure in East Ross	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
Port services	14	£41,216	0%	Yes	14	
Marshalling & Assembly	1185	£37,007	27%	Yes	1185	
Fabrication & Manufacturing	2771	£45,483	64%	Yes	2771	
Marine technology	92	£41,590	2%	Yes	92	
Operations & Maintenance	61	£37,552	1%	Yes	61	
Hydrogen	149	£43,159	3%	Yes	149	
Training	8	£36,792	0%	Yes	8	
Life sciences	0	£44,527	0%	Yes	0	
Spirits	14	£48,808	0%	Yes	14	
Warehousing	15	£38,662	0%	Yes	15	
Hotel accommodation	18	£23,428	0%	No		18
Business administration	0	£34,828	0%	Yes		
All sectors	**4327**	**£42,751**	100%		4309	18
					99.6%	0.4%
All tax sites	**8427**					

* Note: tax sites as at initial OBC submission in September 2023. Any changes to tax site designation since then are not taken account in the above analysis

	Net additional FTE jobs at the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport level	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
East Ross	4327	4309	18
Inverness	4100	3504	596
	8427	7813	614
		93%	7%

Step 1: Adjusted HNDA Housing Estimates - 10-Year Total

HMA	Addition to match 10 year completions	Adjustment for Ineffective stock	Addition for ineffective stock	Adjustment for economic growth	Addition for economic growth	**Adjusted open market target**
B & S	471	10.0%	47	15%	71	**589**
Caithness	462	1.4%	6	15%	69	**538**
East Ross	510	1.0%	5	30%	153	**668**
Inverness	3345	1.0%	33	30%	1003	**4381**
Lochaber	628	4.3%	27	15%	94	**749**
Mid Ross	1115	9.0%	100	30%	334	**1550**
Nairn	350	1.9%	7	15%	53	**410**
West Ross	306	8.9%	27	15%	46	**379**
S & L	694	7.1%	49	15%	104	**848**
Sutherland	319	7.4%	24	15%	48	**390**
	8199		326		1975	**10500**

Step 1: Adjusted HNDA Housing Estimates adjusted fro NET additonal ICFGF FTEs

HMA	Market Housing Addition for economic growth	Net additional FTE jobs at the Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport level (45km boundary)	Economic Growth assumption adjusted for ICFGF Net Additional Jobs
Badenoch & Strathspey	71	0	71
Caithness	69	0	69
East Ross	153	4327	4327
Inverness	1003	4100	4100
Lochaber	94	0	94
Mid Ross	334	0	334
Nairn	53	0	53
West Ross	46	0	46
Skye & Lochalsh	104	0	104
Sutherland	48	0	48
Total Highlands and Islands	1975	8427	9246

8632

819 9246

HMA	Market Housing HST starting point (10-year completions)	Adjustment for Ineffective stock	Addition for ineffective stock	Addition for economic growth adjusted to remove affordable requirement in ICFGF	ICFGF Adjusted Market HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	471	10.0%	47	71	589
Caithness	462	1.4%	6	69	538
East Ross	510	1.0%	5	4309	4824
Inverness	3345	1.0%	33	3504	6882
Lochaber	628	4.3%	27	94	749
Mid Ross	1115	9.0%	100	334	1550
Nairn	350	1.9%	7	53	410
West Ross	306	8.9%	27	46	379
Skye & Lochalsh	694	7.1%	49	104	848
Sutherland	319	7.4%	24	48	390
	8199		326	8632	17157

HMA	Net additional FTE jobs at the ICFGF level	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
East Ross	4327	4309	18
Inverness	4100	3504	596

10-Year HST Targets by HMA	ICFGF Adjusted Affordable HST	ICFGF Adjusted Market HST	Total HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	601	589	1,190
Caithness	175	538	713
East Ross	852	4,824	5,675
Inverness	2,873	6,882	9,755
Lochaber	480	749	1,228
Mid Ross	888	1,550	2,438
Nairn	241	410	651
West Ross	398	379	777
Skye & Lochalsh	392	848	1,240
Sutherland	178	390	568
Highland HST	7,078	17,157	24,235
% Tenure Split	29%	71%	100%

7077 24234

10-Year HST Targets by HMA	ICFGF Adjusted Affordable HST	ICFGF Adjusted Market HST	Total HST
Badenoch & Strathspey	601	589	1,190
Caithness	175	538	713
East Ross	852	4,597	5,449
Inverness	2,873	7,109	9,982
Lochaber	480	749	1,228
Mid Ross	888	1,550	2,438
Nairn	241	410	651
West Ross	398	379	777
Skye & Lochalsh	392	848	1,240
Sutherland	178	390	568
Highland HST	7,078	17,157	24,235
% Tenure Split	29%	71%	100%

	ICFGF 10-Year Housing Supply Targets	5 Year Effective Land Supply (2023/24 - 2027/28)	5 Year supply 2028/29 - 2033/34	10 Year Land Supply
Badenoch & Strathspey	1,190	401	204	605
Caithness	713	47	25	72
East Ross	5,449	538	575	1,113
Inverness	9,982	2,064	2,131	4,195
Lochaber	1,228	337	99	436
Mid Ross	2,438	628	248	876
Nairn	651	260	81	341
West Ross	777	90	29	119
Skye & Lochalsh	1,240	281	256	537
Sutherland	568	305	78	383
Highland	24,235	4,951	3,726	8,677

	Adjusted 10-Year Housing Supply targets	10 Year Established Land Supply	Shortfall/surplus: 10-year established land supply
Badenoch & Strathspey	1,190	605	-585
Caithness	713	72	-641
East Ross	5,449	1,113	-4,336
Inverness	9,982	4,195	-5,787
Lochaber	1,228	436	-792
Mid Ross	2,438	876	-1,562
Nairn	651	341	-310
West Ross	777	119	-658
Skye & Lochalsh	1,240	537	-703
Sutherland	568	383	-185
Highland	24,235	8,677	-15,558

Table 4-10 - 10-year totals of additional Need and Demand by Tenure and Housing Market Area 2019/20 to 2028/29 (for Local Development Plans) – Including In Year Need

Scenario 22 - 10 Year Totals 2019/20-2028/29											
High Migration HH Projection	Badenoch and Strathspey HMA (BS)	Caithness HMA (CA)	East Ross HMA (ER)	Inverness HMA (IN)	Lochaber HMA (LO)	Mid Ross HMA (MR)	Nairn HMA (NA)	Ross and Cromarty West HMA (RCW)	Skye and Lochalsh HMA (SL)	Sutherland HMA (SU)	HC Area Total
In Year Need	140	0	0	1390	110	60	60	20	160	0	1940
Social rent	309	158	246	2195	423	374	189	127	389	114	**4523**
Below Market	122	82	97	947	143	179	76	60	170	64	**1939**
PRS	83	28	83	545	90	201	66	59	162	43	**1362**
Buyers	65	117	77	505	107	149	44	37	56	57	**1215**
Total	**579**	**385**	**503**	**4191**	**764**	**903**	**376**	**284**	**777**	**278**	**9039**

6462

2577

Source: Highland Council Analysis using CHMA HNDA Tool, High Migration Scenario 22

Local Authority New Build Completions

Financial year time series: 1996q2 to latest available by local authority area

This worksheet contains one table

back to contents Go to specific notes

Area	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2013/14-2022/23 All Completions
SCOTLAND	20,696	22,587	20,657	23,107	22,112	22,571	22,747	23,824	26,473	24,958	24,281	25,788	21,024	17,128	16,433	16,075	14,099	15,139	16,748	16,861	17,137	17,571	21,265	22,124	15,795	21,641	23,799	
Highland	1,009	969	801	1,286	1,042	933	1,195	1,232	1,323	1,299	1,849	1,892	1,455	993	1,192	867	791	931	982	883	699	1,068	1,397	1,239	918	1,563	1,325	11,005
																											Average annual	1,101

Private New Build Completions

Financial year time series: 1996q2 to latest available by local authority area

This worksheet contains one table.

back to contents Go to specific notes

Area	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2013/14-2022/23 Private Completions
SCOTLAND	17,492	17,984	18,784	19,074	18,196	18,309	18,938	20,456	22,449	20,260	21,044	21,663	16,111	11,139	10,708	10,185	9,892	11,088	12,568	13,437	13,429	13,031	15,787	16,452	11,982	15,084	16,841	
Highland	792	800	745	1,180	909	806	1,062	1,093	1,192	1,154	1,584	1,517	1,052	625	666	563	577	749	804	632	563	823	1,056	906	729	1,021	916	8,199
																											Average annual	820

Social Sector New Build Completions

Financial year time series: 1996q2 to latest available by local authority area

This worksheet contains one table.

back to contents Go to specific notes

Area	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2017/18-2021/22 Social Completions
SCOTLAND	3,204	4,603	4,873	4,033	3,916	4,262	3,809	3,368	4,024	4,698	3,237	4,125	4,913	5,989	5,725	5,890	4,207	4,051	4,180	3,424	3,708	4,540	5,478	5,673	3,813	6,557	6,958	
Highland	217	169	56	106	133	127	133	139	131	145	265	375	403	368	526	304	214	182	178	251	136	245	341	333	189	542	409	2,806 281

2021 HNDA Completions Stats

Table 3-4 Affordable and All Housing Delivery

Financial Year	RSL	HC	Other Affordable Schemes	Total Affordable Delivery	HC Area ALL Completions
2013/14	82	125	165	**372**	873
2014/15	92	193	176	**461**	921
2015/16	100	118	215	**433**	817
2016/17	50	131	238	**419**	789
2017/18	124	110	232	**466**	981
2018/19	259	162	254	**675**	1280
2019/20	215	141	204	**560**	1361

Total	7022
Average	1003

Job Title: Port Services

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Port Services	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Port Services (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£41,216.00	-£7,791.81	No	£1,030.40
Caithness	£21,914.06	£41,216.00	£19,301.94	Yes	£1,030.40
East Ross	£30,580.08	£41,216.00	£10,635.92	Yes	£1,030.40
Inverness	£40,839.84	£41,216.00	£376.16	Yes	£1,030.40
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£41,216.00	-£1,217.59	No	£1,030.40
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£41,216.00	£4,426.94	Yes	£1,030.40
Nairn	£42,101.56	£41,216.00	-£885.56	No	£1,030.40
West Ross	£43,828.13	£41,216.00	-£2,612.13	No	£1,030.40
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£41,216.00	-£3,940.25	No	£1,030.40
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£41,216.00	£6,883.97	Yes	£1,030.40
Highland	£39,842.75	£41,216.00	£1,373.25	Yes	£1,030.40

Job Title: Marshalling and Assembly

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Marshalling and Assembly	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Marshalling and Assembly (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£37,007.00	-£12,000.81	No	£925.18
Caithness	£21,914.06	£37,007.00	£15,092.94	Yes	£925.18
East Ross	£30,580.08	£37,007.00	£6,426.92	Yes	£925.18
Inverness	£40,839.84	£37,007.00	-£3,832.84	No	£925.18
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£37,007.00	-£5,426.59	No	£925.18
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£37,007.00	£217.94	Yes	£925.18
Nairn	£42,101.56	£37,007.00	-£5,094.56	No	£925.18
West Ross	£43,828.13	£37,007.00	-£6,821.13	No	£925.18
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£37,007.00	-£8,149.25	No	£925.18
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£37,007.00	£2,674.97	Yes	£925.18
Highland	£39,842.75	£37,007.00	-£2,835.75	No	£925.18

Job Title: Fabrication & Manufacturing

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Fabrication & Manufacturing	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Fabrication & Manufacturing (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£45,483.00	-£3,524.81	No	£1,137.08
Caithness	£21,914.06	£45,483.00	£23,568.94	Yes	£1,137.08
East Ross	£30,580.08	£45,483.00	£14,902.92	Yes	£1,137.08
Inverness	£40,839.84	£45,483.00	£4,643.16	Yes	£1,137.08
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£45,483.00	£3,049.41	Yes	£1,137.08
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£45,483.00	£8,693.94	Yes	£1,137.08
Nairn	£42,101.56	£45,483.00	£3,381.44	Yes	£1,137.08
West Ross	£43,828.13	£45,483.00	£1,654.88	Yes	£1,137.08
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£45,483.00	£326.75	Yes	£1,137.08
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£45,483.00	£11,150.97	Yes	£1,137.08
Highland	£39,842.75	£45,483.00	£5,640.25	Yes	£1,137.08

Job Title: Marine Technology

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Marine Technology	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Marine Technology(30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£41,590.00	-£7,417.81	No	£1,039.75
Caithness	£21,914.06	£41,590.00	£19,675.94	Yes	£1,039.75
East Ross	£30,580.08	£41,590.00	£11,009.92	Yes	£1,039.75
Inverness	£40,839.84	£41,590.00	£750.16	Yes	£1,039.75
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£41,590.00	-£843.59	No	£1,039.75
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£41,590.00	£4,800.94	Yes	£1,039.75
Nairn	£42,101.56	£41,590.00	-£511.56	No	£1,039.75
West Ross	£43,828.13	£41,590.00	-£2,238.13	No	£1,039.75
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£41,590.00	-£3,566.25	No	£1,039.75
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£41,590.00	£7,257.97	Yes	£1,039.75
Highland	£39,842.75	£41,590.00	£1,747.25	Yes	£1,039.75

Job Title: Operations & Maintenance

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Operations & Maintenance	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Operations & Maintenance (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£37,552.00	-£11,455.81	No	£938.80
Caithness	£21,914.06	£37,552.00	£15,637.94	Yes	£938.80
East Ross	£30,580.08	£37,552.00	£6,971.92	Yes	£938.80
Inverness	£40,839.84	£37,552.00	-£3,287.84	No	£938.80
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£37,552.00	-£4,881.59	No	£938.80
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£37,552.00	£762.94	Yes	£938.80
Nairn	£42,101.56	£37,552.00	-£4,549.56	No	£938.80
West Ross	£43,828.13	£37,552.00	-£6,276.13	No	£938.80
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£37,552.00	-£7,604.25	No	£938.80
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£37,552.00	£3,219.97	Yes	£938.80
Highland	£39,842.75	£37,552.00	-£2,290.75	No	£938.80

Job Title: Hydrogen

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Hydrogen	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Hydrogen (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£43,159.00	-£5,848.81	No	£1,078.98
Caithness	£21,914.06	£43,159.00	£21,244.94	Yes	£1,078.98
East Ross	£30,580.08	£43,159.00	£12,578.92	Yes	£1,078.98
Inverness	£40,839.84	£43,159.00	£2,319.16	Yes	£1,078.98
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£43,159.00	£725.41	Yes	£1,078.98
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£43,159.00	£6,369.94	Yes	£1,078.98
Nairn	£42,101.56	£43,159.00	£1,057.44	Yes	£1,078.98
West Ross	£43,828.13	£43,159.00	-£669.13	No	£1,078.98
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£43,159.00	-£1,997.25	No	£1,078.98
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£43,159.00	£8,826.97	Yes	£1,078.98
Highland	£39,842.75	£43,159.00	£3,316.25	Yes	£1,078.98

Job Title: Training

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Training	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Training (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£36,792.00	-£12,215.81	No	£919.80
Caithness	£21,914.06	£36,792.00	£14,877.94	Yes	£919.80
East Ross	£30,580.08	£36,792.00	£6,211.92	Yes	£919.80
Inverness	£40,839.84	£36,792.00	-£4,047.84	No	£919.80
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£36,792.00	-£5,641.59	No	£919.80
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£36,792.00	£2.94	Yes	£919.80
Nairn	£42,101.56	£36,792.00	-£5,309.56	No	£919.80
West Ross	£43,828.13	£36,792.00	-£7,036.13	No	£919.80
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£36,792.00	-£8,364.25	No	£919.80
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£36,792.00	£2,459.97	Yes	£919.80
Highland	£39,842.75	£36,792.00	-£3,050.75	No	£919.80

Job Title: Life Sciences

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Life Sciences	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Port Services (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£44,527.00	-£4,480.81	No	£1,113.18

Caithness	£21,914.06	£44,527.00	£22,612.94	Yes	£1,113.18
East Ross	£30,580.08	£44,527.00	£13,946.92	Yes	£1,113.18
Inverness	£40,839.84	£44,527.00	£3,687.16	Yes	£1,113.18
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£44,527.00	£2,093.41	Yes	£1,113.18
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£44,527.00	£7,737.94	Yes	£1,113.18
Nairn	£42,101.56	£44,527.00	£2,425.44	Yes	£1,113.18
West Ross	£43,828.13	£44,527.00	£698.88	Yes	£1,113.18
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£44,527.00	-£629.25	No	£1,113.18
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£44,527.00	£10,194.97	Yes	£1,113.18
Highland	£39,842.75	£44,527.00	£4,684.25	Yes	£1,113.18

Job Title: Spirits

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Spirits	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Spirits (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£48,808.00	-£199.81	No	£1,220.20
Caithness	£21,914.06	£48,808.00	£26,893.94	Yes	£1,220.20
East Ross	£30,580.08	£48,808.00	£18,227.92	Yes	£1,220.20
Inverness	£40,839.84	£48,808.00	£7,968.16	Yes	£1,220.20
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£48,808.00	£6,374.41	Yes	£1,220.20
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£48,808.00	£12,018.94	Yes	£1,220.20
Nairn	£42,101.56	£48,808.00	£6,706.44	Yes	£1,220.20
West Ross	£43,828.13	£48,808.00	£4,979.88	Yes	£1,220.20
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£48,808.00	£3,651.75	Yes	£1,220.20
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£48,808.00	£14,475.97	Yes	£1,220.20
Highland	£39,842.75	£48,808.00	£8,965.25	Yes	£1,220.20

Job Title: Warehousing

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Warehousing	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Warehousing (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£38,662.00	-£10,345.81	No	£966.55
Caithness	£21,914.06	£38,662.00	£16,747.94	Yes	£966.55
East Ross	£30,580.08	£38,662.00	£8,081.92	Yes	£966.55
Inverness	£40,839.84	£38,662.00	-£2,177.84	No	£966.55
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£38,662.00	-£3,771.59	No	£966.55
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£38,662.00	£1,872.94	Yes	£966.55
Nairn	£42,101.56	£38,662.00	-£3,439.56	No	£966.55
West Ross	£43,828.13	£38,662.00	-£5,166.13	No	£966.55
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£38,662.00	-£6,494.25	No	£966.55
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£38,662.00	£4,329.97	Yes	£966.55
Highland	£39,842.75	£38,662.00	-£1,180.75	No	£966.55

Job Title: Hotel Accomodation

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Hotel Accomodation	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Hotel Accomodation (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£23,428.00	-£25,579.81	No	£585.70
Caithness	£21,914.06	£23,428.00	£1,513.94	Yes	£585.70
East Ross	£30,580.08	£23,428.00	-£7,152.08	No	£585.70
Inverness	£40,839.84	£23,428.00	-£17,411.84	No	£585.70
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£23,428.00	-£19,005.59	No	£585.70
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£23,428.00	-£13,361.06	No	£585.70
Nairn	£42,101.56	£23,428.00	-£18,673.56	No	£585.70
West Ross	£43,828.13	£23,428.00	-£20,400.13	No	£585.70
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£23,428.00	-£21,728.25	No	£585.70
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£23,428.00	-£10,904.03	No	£585.70
Highland	£39,842.75	£23,428.00	-£16,414.75	No	£585.70

Job Title: Business Adminstration

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: Business Adminstration	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	Business Adminstration (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£34,828.00	-£14,179.81	No	£870.70
Caithness	£21,914.06	£34,828.00	£12,913.94	Yes	£870.70
East Ross	£30,580.08	£34,828.00	£4,247.92	Yes	£870.70
Inverness	£40,839.84	£34,828.00	-£6,011.84	No	£870.70
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£34,828.00	-£7,605.59	No	£870.70
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£34,828.00	-£1,961.06	No	£870.70
Nairn	£42,101.56	£34,828.00	-£7,273.56	No	£870.70
West Ross	£43,828.13	£34,828.00	-£9,000.13	No	£870.70
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£34,828.00	-£10,328.25	No	£870.70
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£34,828.00	£495.97	Yes	£870.70
Highland	£39,842.75	£34,828.00	-£5,014.75	No	£870.70

Job Title: All Sectors

HMA	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required	Average Income: All Sectors	Difference: Average Income to Market Entry Income Req'd	Afford Market Entry Housing?	All Sectors (30% income monthly)
Badenoch & Strathspey	£49,007.81	£43,694.00	-£5,313.81	No	£1,092.35
Caithness	£21,914.06	£43,694.00	£21,779.94	Yes	£1,092.35
East Ross	£30,580.08	£43,694.00	£13,113.92	Yes	£1,092.35
Inverness	£40,839.84	£43,694.00	£2,854.16	Yes	£1,092.35
Lochaber	£42,433.59	£43,694.00	£1,260.41	Yes	£1,092.35
Mid Ross	£36,789.06	£43,694.00	£6,904.94	Yes	£1,092.35
Nairn	£42,101.56	£43,694.00	£1,592.44	Yes	£1,092.35
West Ross	£43,828.13	£43,694.00	-£134.13	No	£1,092.35
Skye & Lochalsh	£45,156.25	£43,694.00	-£1,462.25	No	£1,092.35
Sutherland	£34,332.03	£43,694.00	£9,361.97	Yes	£1,092.35
Highland	£39,842.75	£43,694.00	£3,851.25	Yes	£1,092.35

2022/23 All Sales (Registers of Scotland)	Market entry level house prices	Market Entry: Gross Household Income Required
Badenoch & Strathspey	£184,500.00	£49,007.81
Caithness	£82,500.00	£21,914.06
East Ross	£115,125.00	£30,580.08
Inverness	£153,750.00	£40,839.84
Lochaber	£159,750.00	£42,433.59
Mid Ross	£138,500.00	£36,789.06
Nairn	£158,500.00	£42,101.56
West Ross	£165,000.00	£43,828.13
Skye & Lochalsh	£170,000.00	£45,156.25
Sutherland	£129,250.00	£34,332.03
Highland	£149,996.25	£39,842.75

Tax sites in East Ross HMA*	Net additional FTE jobs at ICFGF level	Average annual income (2023/24) per gross, direct FTE	Can Afford Market Tenure in East Ross (£30,580)	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
Port services	14	£41,216	Yes	14	
Marshalling & Assembly	1185	£37,007	Yes	1185	
Fabrication & Manufacturing	2771	£45,483	Yes	2771	
Marine technology	92	£41,590	Yes	92	
Operations & Maintenance	61	£37,552	Yes	61	
Hydrogen	149	£43,159	Yes	149	
Training	8	£36,792	Yes	8	

Life sciences	0	£44,527	Yes	0	
Spirits	14	£48,808	Yes	14	
Warehousing	15	£38,662	Yes	15	
Hotel accommodation	18	£23,428	No		18
Business administration	0	£34,828	Yes		
All sectors	**4327**	**£42,751**		**4309**	**18**
			% FTE job roles who can afford each tenure	**99.6%**	**0.4%**

Tax sites in Inverness HMA*	Net additional FTE jobs at ICFGF level	Average annual income (2023/24) per gross, direct FTE	Can Afford Market Tenure in Inverness (£40,839)	Market Housing Requirement	Affordable Housing Requirement
Port services	219	£41,216	Yes	219	
Marshalling & Assembly	413	£37,007	No		413
Fabrication & Manufacturing	2212	£45,483	Yes	2212	
Marine technology	33	£41,590	Yes	33	
Operations & Maintenance	117	£37,552	No		117
Hydrogen	132	£43,159	Yes	132	
Training	18	£36,792	No		18
Life sciences	907	£44,527	Yes	907	
Spirits	0	£48,808	Yes		
Warehousing	0	£38,662	No		
Hotel accommodation	0	£23,428	No		
Business administration	47	£34,828	No		47
All sectors	**4100**	**£43,694**		**3504**	**596**
			% FTE job roles who can afford each tenure	**85.5%**	**14.5%**

	ICFGF 10-Year Housing Supply Targets	5 Year Effective Land Supply (2023/24 - 2027/28)	5 Year supply 2028/29 - 2033/34	10 Year Land Supply
Badenoch & Strathspey	1,190	401	204	605
Caithness	713	47	25	72
East Ross	5,449	538	575	1,113
Inverness	9,982	2,064	2,131	4,195
Lochaber	1,228	337	99	436
Mid Ross	2,438	628	248	876
Nairn	651	260	81	341
West Ross	777	90	29	119
Skye & Lochalsh	1,240	281	256	537
Sutherland	568	305	78	383
Highland	24,235	4,951	3,726	8,677

Housing Market Area (HMA)	2023/4	2024/5	2025/6	2026/7	2027/8	5 year total	5 years 2028/9 to 2033/34	10 year total
Badenoch and Strathspey	107	109	109	48	28	**401**	204	**605**
Caithness	6	17	10	7	7	**47**	25	**72**
East Ross	65	75	88	154	156	**538**	575	**1113**
Inverness	353	451	379	515	366	**2064**	2131	**4195**
Lochaber	146	30	60	50	51	**337**	99	**436**
Mid Ross	82	50	179	186	131	**628**	248	**876**
Nairn	1	20	73	102	64	**260**	81	**341**
Ross and Cromarty West	3	3	16	34	34	**90**	29	**119**
Skye and Lochalsh	56	17	50	74	84	**281**	256	**537**
Sutherland	58	69	72	91	15	**305**	78	**383**
Grand Total	**877**	**841**	**1036**	**1261**	**936**	**4951**	**3776**	**8757**

Table 2 HMA Programming Summary

Appendix 2 – Highland Local Development Plan: Draft Call for Sites Submission Template

The following tables list the information that development site proponents will be asked to provide in submitting a Call for Sites response. When issued, these tables will be combined into an online form and useful published information sources added as hyperlinks.

1 SITE & PROPOSAL DETAILS

No.	Information Requested	Method of Data Entry / Notes
1	Site Name	Free text field.
2	Site Location	Free text field.
3	Settlement (or nearest settlement)	A drop-down list will be created.
4	Site Area (hectares)	The proponent will create a shapefile of the site in the consultation software.
5	OS Grid Reference (centre of site)	Supplied by proponent or automatically generated from centroid of shapefile.
6	Current land use(s)	A drop-down list will be created.
7	Proposed land use(s)	A drop-down list will be created.
8	Scale of proposed development (housing units and/or non-housing floorspace)	Free text field.
9	Planning history (previous planning application(s) permission(s) (if known / applicable)	Free text field.
10	Ownership(s), any tenancies, any burdens	Free text field.
11	Any supporting evidence (masterplan, site survey, investigation and/or viability assessment(s))	A PDF/JPEG file upload option will be available (with a confidentiality option).

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL CRITERIA

2 WATER ENVIRONMENT

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Could the proposal affect the condition of the water environment (water quality, physical condition, water resources, and the migration of wild fish)?	Check SEPA's Water Environment Hub webpage for further data on water body condition.
ii	Could the proposal have a direct impact on the water environment (for example, result in the need for watercourse crossings, a large-scale abstraction or allow the de-culverting of a watercourse?	Onsite check and/or OS base mapping. Specify minimum built development setback from any affected watercourse.
iii	Can the proposal connect to the public foul sewer?	Scottish Water Extranet check and Pre Development Enquiry (PDE) results.
iv	Can the proposal connect to the public water mains? If not, is there a sustainable water source that is resilient to the periods of water scarcity?	Scottish Water Extranet check and Pre Development Enquiry (PDE) results and Environmental Health.
v	Are there wetlands or boggy areas on the site?	Onsite check and/or OS base mapping.
vi	For large scale developments, are there any private or public water supplies within 250m of the site which may be affected?	Scottish Water Extranet check and Environmental Health.

3 CLIMATE CHANGE

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Relative to the future flood risk areas, as defined on SEPA's website mapping, could the proposal be at risk of flooding (from any source) or result in additional flood risk elsewhere? If so then specify which of the following flood sources are applicable: fluvial, pluvial, sewer, groundwater or coastal.	SEPA website Future Flood Risk mapping. If there is any overlap with a mapped risk area then a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be undertaken and supplied.
ii	Could the development of the site help alleviate any existing flooding problems in the area?	Any net betterment relative to existing flow rates / volumes assessed by Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA)?
iii	Is the proposal in a coastal location? Is it likely to be affected by or have a significant effect on coastal flooding, erosion or natural coastal processes?	Check Dynamic Coast and SEPA website Future (coastal) Flood Risk mapping.
iv	To what extent will the proposal promote and enable adaptation to climate change?	Detail any positive elements.
v	To what extent does the proposal use nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation?	Detail any positive elements.
vi	To what extent does the proposal maintain and enhance resilience of existing and planned grey and green infrastructure?	Detail any positive elements.
vii	Are the site's altitude, aspect and shelter from prevailing winds likely to minimise heating energy costs?	Interpret from OS and Met Office local climate data.
viii	Is the site in an area of heat network potential or a designated Heat Network Zone (HNZ)?	Check latest LHEES.

4 BIODIVERSITY

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	To what extent will the proposal conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity?	Apply THC's approved non-statutory Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance.
ii	To what extent will the proposal facilitate the creation of nature networks and improve ecological connectivity?	Apply THC's approved non-statutory Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance.
iii	To what extent will the proposal affect International Designations (e.g. Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Ramsar, World Heritage) sites including their connectivity?	Check NatureScot's SiteLink for geographic proximity. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Appropriate Assessment and Habitats Regulations Appraisal processes will formally assess likely effects.
iv	To what extent will the proposal affect national designations (e.g. SSSI, NNR)	Check SiteLink for geographic proximity.
v	To what extent will the proposal affect other designations - and locally important designations such as Local Nature Reserves.	THC and Scotland's Environment websites.
vi	To what extent will the proposal affect Non designated – e.g. trees, TPOs, hedges, woodland, (including woodlands	THC and Scotland's Environment websites.

	in the Ancient , Semi Natural and Long Established Plantation Woodlands), species rich grasslands	
vii	Protected Species–e.g. bats, otters, etc - can it be ascertained if protected species will be affected and will a site survey be required?	Local survey(s).
viii	To what extent will local geodiversity sites or wider geodiversity interests that could be affected by the proposal?	Sitelink and Scotland's Environment websites.
ix	How will habitat connectivity or wildlife corridors be affected by the proposal – will it result in habitat fragmentation or greater connectivity?	Local survey(s) and existing LDP green network mapping.

5 AIR QUALITY / HEALTH & SAFETY

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Could the proposal lead to Local Air Quality Management thresholds being breached in an existing Air Quality Management Area?	Scotland's Environment and Highland Council websites.
ii	Could the proposal lead to the designation of a new Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)?	Y/N
iii	Does the proposal introduce a new potentially significant air emission to the area (e.g. combined heat and power, an industrial process, large scale quarry etc.)?	Y/N
iv	Will the proposal lead to a sensitive use being located close to a site with noise/odour issues or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA (e.g. new housing adjacent to a large manufacturing factory)	Y/N (apply NPF4 Agent of Change principle)
v	Is the proposal within the consultation zone of a major accident hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline?	THC and Health and Safety Executive data.

6 WASTE & NATURAL RESOURCES

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will the proposal affect the quantity, quality or connectivity of open space or the wider green network?	Local survey(s) and LDP greenspace audit and mapping.
ii	Will the proposal be on vacant or derelict land, or on other previously used land (brownfield land, potentially contaminated land)?	Local survey(s) and aerial photography.
iii	Is the proposal on peat or carbon rich soils and could the development of the site lead to a loss of peat or carbon rich soils?	Scotland's Environment website.
iv	Will the proposal affect prime farmland, good quality agricultural soils or locally important croft land?	Scotland's Environment and Crofting Register websites.
v	Is the proposal adjacent to a waste management site and could compromise its operation?	Local survey(s) and aerial photography.
vi	Does the proposal minimise demand for primary resources by reusing an existing building?	Local survey(s) and aerial photography.
vii	For waste infrastructure and facilities (except landfill and Energy from Waste) does the proposal comply with the criteria listed in NPF4 Policy 12 d)?	EIA, local survey(s) and aerial photography.

7 LANDSCAPE

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	To what extent will any nationally designated sites be affected (NSAs and Wild Land areas)	Scotland's Environment website.
ii	To what extent will any regionally/locally designated sites be affected (Special Landscape Areas [SLAs])?	THC website.
iii	Will the proposal exceed local landscape (including townscape and visual) capacity?	Proposal-specific assessment.
iv	Will the proposal have significant effects on landscape character?	Proposal-specific assessment.
v	Will the proposal have significant effects on the character of the existing settlement including its setting?	Proposal-specific assessment.

8 CULTURAL HERITAGE

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will the proposal have significant effects on scheduled monuments or their setting?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
ii	Will the proposal have significant effects on locally important archaeological sites?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
iii	Will the proposal have significant effects on listed buildings or their setting?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
iv	Will the proposal have significant effects on a Conservation Area?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
v	Will the proposal have significant effects on Garden and Designed Landscapes?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
vi	Will the proposal have significant effects on an Inventory Historic Battlefield?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
vii	Will the proposal have significant effects on a World Heritage Site?	Apply Heritage Impact Assessment Toolkit
viii	Can the proposal enhance or improve public access to the historic environment?	Proposal-specific assessment.
ix	Does the proposal promote or enable the retention, maintenance, resilience, green energy transition, efficiency and sustainable use or re-use of historic buildings and infrastructure?	Proposal-specific assessment.

9 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will the proposal require significant new transport infrastructure?	Proposal-specific assessment of the spare existing infrastructure capacity to service the development.
ii	Will the proposal increase the overall car km travelled thereby increasing carbon emissions and therefore exacerbating climate change?	Proposal-specific assessment which should include the likely modal split of future journeys.
iii	Will the development of the site impact on core paths and other active travel networks that could reduce the attractiveness of carbon neutral travel options (inc. pedestrian priority/desire lines)?	Apply Core Paths, Active Travel Audits and LDP networks from Council's website.
iv	How well will the proposal fit with the NPF4 "Local Living" and "20 Minute Neighbourhoods" principles?	Apply Council's Local Living Tool.

10 INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY (In line with NPF4 Infrastructure First Principle)

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Is there sufficient existing and programmed nursery, primary and secondary school capacity to service the proposed development?	Council's School Roll Forecasts and Delivery Programme.
ii	Is there sufficient existing and programmed mains water and sewerage capacity to service the proposed development?	Scottish Water feedback from proponent's Pre Development Enquiry.
iii	Is there sufficient existing and programmed health facility capacity to service the proposed development?	NHS Highland and Public Health Scotland websites.
iv	Will the proposal have the opportunity to incorporate new or enhance existing blue and/or green infrastructure providing multiple benefits such as enhanced biodiversity, management of surface water?	Proposal-specific assessment.

11 PLACEMAKING

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will the development deliver on all of the six qualities of successful places?	Proposal-specific assessment against NPF4 Policy 14.
ii	Will the proposal impact on the placemaking priorities for the settlement/area?	Proposal-specific assessment against the existing area LDP Placemaking Priorities.
iii	To what extent will the proposal affect the quality and quantity of open space and connectivity and accessibility to open space or result in a loss of open space?	Proposal-specific assessment against NPF4 Policy 20. Apply Council's Play Sufficiency Assessment when available and if relevant to proposal.

12 DELIVERABILITY

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will developer contributions (financial sums) rather than direct developer funded improvements be needed?	Proposal-specific assessment. Apply Council's published Developer Contributions Guidance and Delivery Programme.
ii	Are there abnormal costs that could impact the site's delivery (e.g. physical constraints, contamination, topography etc.)?	Proposal-specific assessment.
iii	Are there any significant landownership issues which need to be overcome?	Proposal-specific assessment.
iv	Will the site be delivered within the LDP timeframe (10 years from adoption)?	Proposal-specific assessment.

13 COMPATABILITY WITH EXISTING POLICY

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Is the site and proposal compatible with NPF4?	Interpret and apply all relevant NPF4 policies.
ii	Is the site and proposal compatible with any applicable Local Place Plan?	Interpret and apply all relevant Local Place Plan policies.

iii	Is the site and proposal compatible with any applicable Area Place Plan?	Interpret and apply all relevant Area Place Plan policies.
iv	Is the site and proposal compatible with THC's "community resilience network" evidence	Apply published Council guidance.
v	Is the site and proposal compatible with the existing area local development plan?	Interpret and apply all relevant area local development plan policies.

2 Infrastructure First

Key headlines

This section aims to provide a clear understanding of this national policy theme that requires infrastructure considerations to be at the forefront of plan preparation. In fulfilling this requirement it outlines how the Council's existing partnership for infrastructure and developer contributions might inform the ongoing approach. That includes the existing Developer Contributions Protocol - that highlights the role of communities and emerging Local Place Plans - and the Developer Contributions Action Group as a coordinating activity. It outlines an intention to strengthen links with NHS Highland to help identify, plan and fund any gaps in primary healthcare associated with new development. It mentions the infrastructure evidence expected to be provided by those submitting candidate sites under the Call for Sites above. A cross-reference is also provided to the Area Profiles summarised below that each contain an overview of the infrastructure capacity.

Infrastructure First

Headline Issue

Making the most of our current and new assets, services and infrastructure to maintain high quality communities and deliver Net Zero

1. National Policy and Legislation

To help confirm the evidence required for infrastructure in Highland we start by looking at the national policy requirements that the plan will need to fulfil.

What is Infrastructure First?

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) introduces an infrastructure first approach to land use planning, which puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking. In particular, it seeks to ensure that infrastructure needs are understood and identified early in the development planning process as part of an evidence-based approach.

"Infrastructure First" is also intrinsically linked to the goal of achieving net zero emissions, emphasising the need to optimise access to services while minimising the carbon impact of new infrastructure investments. This approach ensures that infrastructure planning not only meets current and future community needs but also aligns with sustainability goals. By prioritising efficient, low-carbon solutions, "Infrastructure First" supports the development of resilient, climate-friendly infrastructure. This is crucial for areas like Highland, where the natural environment is both a valuable asset and a potential vulnerability. Implementing an "Infrastructure First" strategy helps balance development with environmental stewardship, ensuring that new projects contribute to Scotland's broader objectives of reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainable growth.

NPF4 highlights that an infrastructure-first approach can be taken in Development Plans by identifying infrastructure priorities based on evidence of current capacity, condition, needs, and deliverability within the plan area, forming the foundation for the LDP and associated delivery programmes. This comprehensive approach requires alignment with national, regional, and local policies, considering the Scottish Government's investment hierarchies fostering coordinated and sustainable development across Scotland. Policy 18 of NPF4 requires a fully integrated infrastructure-first approach, and to ensure that infrastructure needs and capacities are addressed from the outset. This is a clear acknowledgment of how important infrastructure planning and delivery is to placemaking and well-planned communities. The detailed requirements for LDPs are as follows:

Plans should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;

- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

The Local Development Planning Guidance underscores the importance of an "Infrastructure First" approach, and provides more detailed advice for new LDPs in how this should be considered at every stage of the plan process. The links with infrastructure and service delivery are critical and will play a key role in putting infrastructure and service providers at the heart of plan making, but also its delivery through the Delivery Programme. Early and consistent stakeholder engagement is crucial for informed decision-making and successful implementation, promoting sustainable and coordinated development.

This means that the Delivery Programme will need to be ambitious to steer the delivery of new LDP and ideally it should:

- clearly indicate how sites are prioritised;
- specify actions and timescales to deliver sites, including any interventions required, and identifying any costs and constraints and a clear pathway to addressing them e.g. funding sources, timescales / phasing;
- specify how and when developer contributions will be sought, collected and become available over time to support the delivery of development;
- establish a deliverable housing land pipeline for the LHLR;
- identify a pathway to delivery for longer term allocations; and
- the annual HLA will monitor the delivery of housing land to inform the pipeline and the actions to be taken in the Delivery Programme.

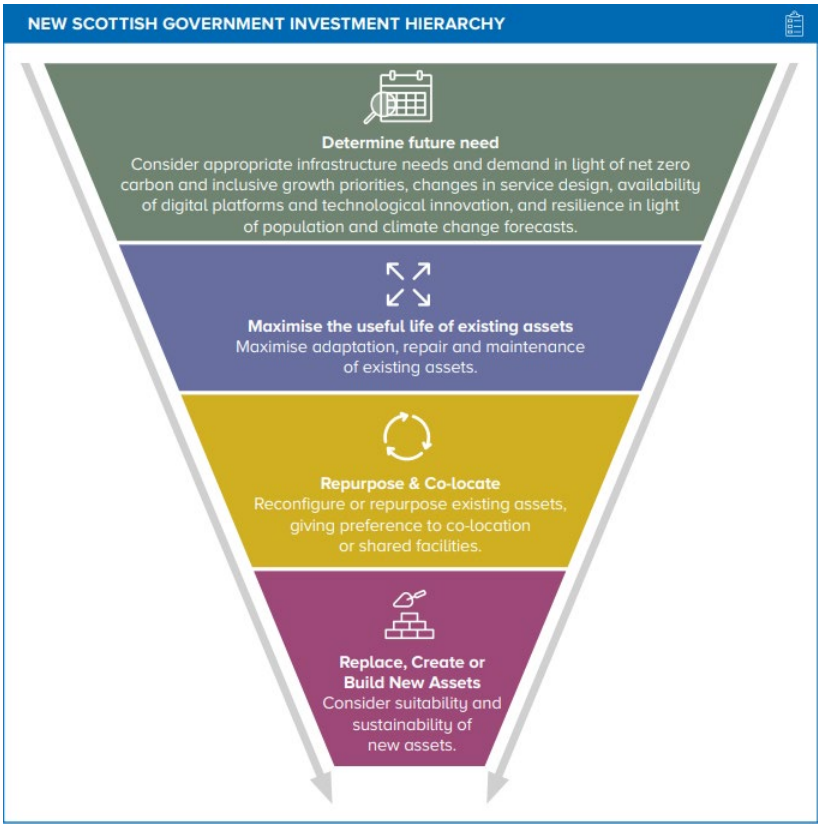
In addition to the above, the Chief Planner letter of Planning for housing highlighted a requirement for all current Action / Delivery Programmes to reflect this new approach, particularly for the preparation of a housing pipeline. As such, the Council will already have to update its Delivery Programme to reflect these requirements, and this may have knock on implications and benefits for infrastructure planning.

For the new Local Development Plan, the evidence that is gathered by the Council and sought from an early stage will need to include the infrastructure implications of any suggestions or proposals.

Infrastructure First

The Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland reinforces the need for decisions on the management of - and investment in - infrastructure to be guided by the following strategic themes:Enabling the transition to net zero emissions and environmental sustainability

- Driving inclusive economic growth
- Building resilient and sustainable places It also includes an investment hierarchy to steer enhancing and maintaining our assets over new build which is needed to protect our environment and ensure value for money.



Other Guidance - Planning Circular 3/2012 sets out the scope and limitations for Planning Authorities requiring that all infrastructure and developer contributions (also known as planning obligations) should be tested against the five following tests: -
Planning obligations made under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms;
- serve a planning purpose and, where it is possible to identify infrastructure provision requirements in advance, should relate to development plans;
- relate to the proposed development either as a direct consequence of the development or arising from the cumulative impact of development in the area;
- and fairly and reasonably relate in scale and kind to the proposed development
- be reasonable in all other respects."

Infrastructure Levy Scotland (ILS)

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 ("the 2019 Act") provided the power for Scottish Ministers to make regulations to introduce an Infrastructure Levy for Scotland (ILS), that is, a charge payable to a local authority on development in that local authority's area, to be spent on the provision of infrastructure. This is intended to provide an additional stream of funding, over and above any developer contribution requirements, for infrastructure which is needed to support growth on a wider scale than individual developments. Scottish

Ministers have recently published a 'discussion paper' for consultation on the options to implement the ILS and the Council has provided a response to this consultation.

Whilst in general, the Council is supportive of the principles of the ILS, care needs to be given to its implementation to reconcile any negative impacts it could have in delivering upon the Council's recently declare Housing Challenge and success in achieving other "mainstream" developer contributions.

Additionally, recognition must be afforded to differing market conditions across Highlands and the viability of development at the time of decision. In some areas it may be possible to remove, reduce or prioritise different infrastructure requirements, but there may be circumstances where development may have to be controlled or phased in order to manage likely infrastructure constraints.

2. Highland's Proposed Approach to Infrastructure First

Infrastructure management and delivery is crucial to the preparation and delivery of the Development Plan in Highland and in addressing major issues such as the climate and ecological emergency, the Council's Housing Challenge and the Highland Investment Plan. The management and investment of infrastructure in Highland is challenging due to several factors:

- the region's vast and differing terrain;
- its widely dispersed population but also a denser City conurbation;
- limited existing infrastructure capacity; and,
- challenging climatic conditions.

In Highland, there are growing demands on the services and facilities in our larger towns and City, which need careful ongoing monitoring and investment, alongside calls to respond to demographic forecasts that indicate a need to focus on rural repopulation and the retention and bolstering of services to maintain and build viable communities. These factors complicate construction, increase costs, and require careful planning to ensure sustainable development.

Taking account of these conditions and the national policy requirements outlined above, the potential approach to evidence for 'Infrastructure First' in the HLDP can be understood under the following four themes:

A. What are the implications for our Strategic Infrastructure?

B. For infrastructure required to support and deliver development, what are the existing and potential future arrangements for managing infrastructure and coordinating funding sources? How well is this working? What is the role of the community?

C. Who are our infrastructure providers and how will we and they work together to understand the capacity, condition, needs and deliverability of their infrastructure networks?

D. What evidence can promoters of development sites provide?

In response, the sections below look at what evidence there is to guide the approach to these four issues in the new HLDP. Item A looks at the nationally important strategic infrastructure issues that will also need to be considered in the new HLDP across and then further. It then focuses on the development-led infrastructure issues that need to be managed by the Council and partners and for which our approach will be informed by the Infrastructure First principle in NPF4. This takes account of how well our existing approach is operating in particular the developer contributions protocol and guidance.

A. Strategic Infrastructure

Strategic Infrastructures as identified in IRSS

Before we consider the infrastructure and provision of services that are more directly impacted by development there are a number of strategic issues for infrastructure that may need to be considered. There are a number of strategic infrastructure priorities identified in Highland's IRSS which are summarised below in terms of their relevance to the future plan and as to whether any further evidence may be needed:

- **Trunk and Other Strategic Road Improvements** – Trunk roads play an integral role in connecting our communities, businesses and visitors and many have a major influence on the placemaking and qualities of a place. Highland is awaiting the confirmation of a number of strategic road improvements that are required to support future development. The trunk road projects listed below are identified most recently published Highland LDP Delivery Programme:
    - A9 Dualling Perth to Inverness
    - A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen
    - A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton (also known as East Link)
    - A9/A82 Longman Junction Improvement Scheme
    - A9 North Kessock to Tore

- Fort William Improvements & Wider Transport Appraisal

Lack of certainty could have significant issues for the area's growth in sustainable housing, leisure, recreation and tourism development and the provision of high-quality year-round employment opportunities.

- **Rail Infrastructure Improvements** – There are several rail improvement projects being identified in the Strategic Transport Review 2 detailed in the Transport Evidence paper.
- **National Grid Improvements** – As reflected in this link SSEN, there are several projects been identified for Highland which are underway.
- **Digital Network** – some proposed improvements to digital infrastructure are set out in Highland's IRSS and a number of works are underway. The current LDP Delivery Programme provides an overview of the progress in delivering such improvements. Future development will inevitably require a greater understanding of delivering corresponding digital infrastructure. Further evidence on this will be sought through future consultations for the preparation of the new HLDP.

There are a number of other relevant issues for our strategic infrastructure that will need to be considered in the new plan:

- **Courts & Prison Service** – HMP Highland is currently under construction by the Scottish Prison Service at Eastfield Way, Inverness and is expected to be completed in summer 2026. Once complete the existing HMP Inverness (Porterfield Prison) will be decommissioned. The construction of the new prison, follows completion of the Justice Centre in Inverness in 2020. These facilities are understood to be suitable for current and projected demand however discussion with the operators will be undertaken to confirm future requirements.
- **Defence** – some large areas of MoD estate across various locations in Highland. There is a medium term intention to vacate most of the Fort George landholding in the Inner Moray Firth area. Any plans or proposals for the reuse or adaptation of such facilities will need to be considered and these changes will need to be planned proactively through the LDP process. We will also consult with the MoD as the Proposed Plan emerges.
- **Waste** – The Council's strategy is to reduce the quantity of residual (after recyclable items have been removed) waste we collect and process, increasing the quantity and quality of recyclable materials being collected and support increasing reuse therefore better aligning with national policy as expressed through the The Circular Economy Bill and Waste Route Map. A key change in waste management operations within Highland and Scotland is the impending ban on landfilling biodegradable municipal waste from 31 December 2025. There are two principal options open to Highland Council:
    - Send the residual waste to an energy-from-waste facility outwith Highland or

- Develop an energy-from-waste facility located locally, potentially at the closed Longman landfill site, Inverness

A Council decision following an assessment of the updated feasibility study will be reached by November 2024

- **Energy Infrastructure** - see detail within the Climate Change, Energy and Decarbonisation evidence pack. We will need to consider what Highland's significant role in energy generation, transmission and national decarbonisation mean for our assets and infrastructure. We also need to consider the implications of the ongoing nuclear decommisioning of Dounreay, taking account of the most up-to-date information available about the timescale and steps for working towards the Interim End State, and any opportunities for optimising future use of the sites's assets.
- **National Transport** – There are a number of nationally significant infrastructure networks (for example trunk roads, rail, airports, ports and harbours) many of which are owned and managed by Scottish Government or their related agencies. The transport section provides an overview of the capacity and condition of these transport assets and highlights that national investment in key infrastructure will be a significant influence on where development can happen and how major employment development is supported. The Highland Council and other regional partners are seeking greater certainty on the delivery of these commitments as there are fears that lack of investment could act as an impediment to delivering the vision for the area and ensuring that national and local priorities can be delivered. In terms of evidence for the new plan the transport section also talks about the potential need for different scenarios to be mapped out for such infrastructure in Highland. It has not been possible to secure such guarantees through Transport Scotland and the Key Agency Group but we will continue to work with these partners to identify scenarios and solutions.
- **Hydrocarbon storage and distribution** (for example Inverness and other fuel depots across Highland and pipelines that carry natural gas and other fuels) – Implications for individual sites and settlements will be picked up through the later Plan's site assessment process. We are aware of these facilities and where they have implications for surrounding developments and our communities. We will continue to work with HSE to examine the implications they have for development options and to ensure they remain safeguarded where appropriate.

B. What are the existing and potential future arrangements for managing infrastructure and coordinating funding sources? How well is this working? What is the role of the community?

The Highland Council's adopted Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance sets out the Council's current approach to identifying developer contributions at the local level, reiterating the national approach. Where developers are asked to contribute financially to the provision of new and enhanced infrastructure the Council and infrastructure partners need to have clear evidence to link the proposed development with the corresponding infrastructure requirements.

On 17th August 2023 the Council's Economy & Infrastructure Committee agreed a Developer Contributions Protocol that provides an overview of each stage of the process for identifying infrastructure and service requirements and agreeing and applying developer contributions, as shown below. This outlines how partners can contribute to the decisions about the infrastructure required to support and manage the implications of development, and how the eligibility of projects for developer contributions is confirmed. It highlights the stages of the planning process where different types of partners and communities contribute to these decisions, and how decisions are made where there are different views on what is required and how developer contributions are spent.

The protocol confirms the role of various stakeholders in advising on the capacity of current infrastructure and how to manage and address the delivery of new and improved infrastructure. The **Developer Contributions Action Group (DCAG)** comprises various specialist advisors for different types of infrastructure who advise on compatibility with national and local policies.

Highland Council's Developer Contributions Protocol (2023)

1. Communities and partners are encouraged to identify requirements for future development and/or their place during the preparation of a Local Development Plan (LDP) and any Area Plan (typically led by the public sector) – including placemaking priorities and place and/or site specific infrastructure requirements;
2. Local Development Plans (LDPs), LDP Delivery Programme, Development Briefs and Masterplans therefore identify upfront requirements;

3. Alongside, communities are encourage to prepare their own Local Place Plan to identify the unique requirements and ambitions for their community;
4. Where an appropriate representative Community Group identifies a new project or priority that might be eligible for Developer Contributions, they can make recommendations for consideration by the Developer Contributions Action Group (through the Developer Contributions Officer) and subsequent decision by Area Committee (in line with step 7 of the Protocol;
5. At application or pre-application stage Case Officer identifies requirements based on feedback from specialist officers and representations on the planning application etc, including requirements from LDP, Delivery Programme, Dev Brief, Place Plan, Local Place Plan as necessary;
6. Determination of application confirms appropriate mitigation; by the Case Officer if determined by delegation; or NPAC/SPAC would provide an opportunity for Members to highlight alternative mitigation methods;
7. In circumstances where alternative mitigation is flagged, or where mitigation can't be agreed, or where spend hasn't been identified – Area Committee given chance to agree appropriate mitigation, with officer input as outlined above. 'Where an appropriate representative Community Group identifies a new project or priority that might be eligible for Developer Contributions, they can make recommendations for consideration by the Developer Contributions Action Group (through the Developer Contributions Officer) and subsequent decision by Area Committee (in line with step 7 of the Protocol).'

How well is this working and what is the role for the community?

Our existing approach is considered to work well in the context of national requirements. In line with the agreed protocol, where a deficiency in services or infrastructure is identified at the application stage, the case officer works in consultation with specialist officers or partners for each type of infrastructure to confirm whether contributions need to be sought, based on requirements identified in the LDP. Through the determination of the application, and in combination with the specialist contacts, the case officer negotiates, on behalf of the Council, the appropriate mitigation to be provided or for financial contributions to be made.

As a well-developed approach which relies on the expertise of designated specialist partners, the Council intends to carry forward the developer contributions protocol as the basis for the ongoing approach to infrastructure management. It is believed to be a credible approach that, in principle, addresses the fundamental implications of development for infrastructure and services. However, we invite comments below on the suitability of this approach.

Under this intended approach the process of identifying infrastructure requirements and the contributions required to deliver them would remain part of the remit of the **Developer Contributions Action Group (DCAG)**. However, there is a commitment to strengthen the links and inter-relationships between DCAG and the Council's Capital Programme. The protocol and CDAG working arrangements are felt to be suitable and appropriate in adhering to the requirements for the preparing and delivering the new HLDP. The next section confirms the evidence partners will use to manage that ongoing process. The Council sees the role of the community being through the Local Place Plan process, community council involvement and as part of the statutory planning notification process.

Consultation Question:

1. **Should the council consider an alternative developer contributions approach and if so, what should it be and why?**

C. Who are our infrastructure providers and how will we and they work together to understand the capacity, condition, needs and deliverability of their infrastructure networks?

NPF4 requires LDPs to be clear about the types of infrastructure that may need to be built or improved, and the assets that should be protected to ensure they continue to benefit future generations. Scotland's Infrastructure Investment Plan and National Transport Strategy are clear that we must work with our existing infrastructure assets first, before investing in additional assets.

Under our intended approach to continue to use the Protocol and DCAG working arrangements there will a clear process for addressing these requirements. Most types of infrastructure are covered well and there is a nominated specialist to advise on such matters. However, there is a need to address a gap in evidence around the capacity of healthcare infrastructure and the implications of development. This is an area where there are opportunities for improvements based on good examples across Scotland. Initial discussions are underway with NHS Highland and it is hoped that a suitable approach can be found to identifying evidence to justify proportionate healthcare contributions from development towards identified requirements to deliver the spatial strategy in the LDP and meet the Delivery Programme commitments.

Infrastructure First

The table below identifies the wide range of infrastructure types, along with the appropriate organisation and known or likely provider contact. In line with LDP guidance it also outlines the sources of evidence for the capacity, condition, needs and deliverability of each type of infrastructure and highlights potential gaps in evidence. Views are sought on the suitability and sufficiency of the evidence sources and contacts for each type of infrastructure in preparing and delivering the HLDP.

Ref	Type of Infrastructure	Responsible Agency	Source of evidence on the capacity, condition, needs, deliverability and responsibilities for delivery of this infrastructure, and what gaps exist? Identify any sources		Have Developer Contributions been sought towards these (Yes/No)
EDUCATION					
	Early Years	The Council's Education and Estates Teams	Annual School Roll Forecasts, using Housing Land Audit or Housing Pipeline. Requirements can carried through to the Delivery Programmes https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/818/school_roll_forecasts		Yes but for housing only. Also, the implications of development for nursery / early years has not been planned for alongside primary and secondary impacts.
	Primary				
	Secondary				
	ASN/Special		Requirements for ASN provision is not typically identified or sought through new development	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools_-_additional_support_needs https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/education/5394859/highland-council-special-schools-admissions-asn-asl-funding/	No
	Further/Higher Education	Education team (THC), UHI	Requirements for further and higher education are not identified or sought through new development	https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/15939/more_highland_school_leavers_than_ever_before_moving_into_a_positive_destination https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/	No
HEALTHCARE					
	Primary	NHS	Consult NHS for Capacity information	https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/staff-and-partners/primary-care/	No
	Hospital		National Treatment Centre was opened in April 2023, Consult NHS for Capacity information	https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/in-person-services-and-locations/hospitals/national-treatment-centre-highland-inverness/	No
	Dental		Updated list of NHS registered Dentists; Consult NHS for Capacity information	https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/in-person-services-and-locations/dental-practices/#NHSHighlanddentistslistpdf	No
	Pharmacy		Consult NHS for Capacity information	https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/in-person-services-and locations/pharmacies/#NHSHighlandpharmacies	No
	Later Life		Consult NHS for Capacity information		No
WELLBEING, SPORTS & LESIURE					
	Play Area	THC – Amenities team, Council's Play	Amenity Team - Play Area Audits Council's Play Sufficiency Assessment	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/283/community_life_and_leisure/987/play_areas	Yes (housing applications only)

		Sufficiency Assessment	Review of Open Space SG		
	Open Space (Green & Blue)	THC – Environment team and Dev Plans, Planning Students survey, OS Map based survey	We will still need to do Open Space Audits; Greenspace Audits – Map based survey Up to date information from the Environment team. Review of Open Space SG	https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712037/open_space_in_new_residential_development	Yes (housing applications only)
	Swimming & Gym Facilities	HLH	Consult HLH for the latest information There may be others but for this paper we will consider them. Should we include Local gyms/ privately owned gyms and swimming facilities? Privately owned swimming pools for the public As per the Delivery Programmes	https://www.highlifehighland.com/leisure/find-a-leisure-centre/	Yes (housing applications only)
	Competitive Play	Highland Games, Sports clubs, privately owned businesses	Get latest information from the Scotland organisation conducting Highland Games There may be others but for this paper we will consider them.	https://www.scotland.org/events/highland-games/about-highland-games	Yes (in some but not all cases)
Civic					
	Community Hubs / Service Points	TBC			No
	Cemeteries	THC	Update Required	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/640/birth_marriage_and_death/322/funerals_graves_and_cremations/5	No
	Cultural & Music Facilities	HLH, THC, Community Development	Update Required	https://www.highlifehighland.org/press-enquiries/ https://www.highlifehighland.org/press-enquiries/ https://www.highlifehighland.com/inverness-museum-and-art-gallery/	Yes

		Trust - Museums			
	Libraries	HLH	Update Required	https://www.highlifehighland.com/libraries/	No
	Drinking Water Refill	Scottish Water	Update Required	https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/your-home/campaigns/top-up-tap-map	No
	Waste Management & Recycling	THC, Private Operators	Update Required	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1054/rubbish_and_recycling	Yes
	Emergency Services	Scottish Police Service, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance, Mountains Rescue, HM Coast Guard, Scottish Air Ambulance, RNLI	Update Required	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/71/emergency_contacts#:~:text=In%20an%20emergency%20dial%20999,01382%20835804%20(24%20hours). https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/in-person-services-and-locations/accident-and-emergency-a-e/ https://www.scottishambulance.com/ https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/ https://www.scottishmountainrescue.org/ https://hmcoastguard.uk/ https://www.scaa.org.uk/	No
	Public Art	THC	Review of Public Art SG	https://www.highland.gov.uk/publicartstrategy	Yes
Local Transport					
	Active Travel (Incl. reuse of disused railway lines for "future public transport infrastructure").	THC – Active Travel Team, Roads Team, Transport Scotland, Hi-Trans	Update Required	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1529/road_safety/1083/active_and_sustainable_travel/4 https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/your-services/related-services-and-accessibility/travel-and-transport/active-travel/ https://hitrans.org.uk/Travel_Modes/Active_Travel https://www.sustrans.org.uk/find-a-route-on-the-national-cycle-network/national-cycle-network-routes-in-argyll-bute-and-highland	Yes
	Public Transport (Incl. reuse of disused railway lines for "future public transport infrastructure").	THC- Active Travel, Transport, Stagecoach, Scotrail, LNER, Council Bus service, Hi-Trans, Bus Partnership (Fund/Group),	Update Required	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1526/public_and_community_transport/111/public_transport_in_highland/2 https://www.stagecoachbus.com/ https://www.scotrail.co.uk/inspiration-hub/great-places-to-visit/highlands https://www.lner.co.uk/destinations/ https://www.invernessbedandbreakfast.co.uk/transport.htm	Yes

		Small Operators – D&E Coaches, Calmac for ferries			
	Parking Provision (Incl. EV & Cycle)	THC, Parking Team, Hi-Trans, Small Operators	Update Required	https://www.highland.gov.uk/parking https://cycling.scot/news-and-blog/article/support-for-schools-to-provide-bikes-and-improve-cycle-parking	Yes
	Road Network	THC, Transport Scotland, Hi-Trans	Update Required	https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-no-39-2020-edition/chapter-4-road-network/ https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements	Yes
	Ports & Harbours	THC, Transport Scotland, Hi-Trans	Update Required	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1523/transport_and_streets/102/harbours https://www.transport.gov.scot/transport-network/ports-and-harbours/harbour-orders/harbour-order-decisions/	No
UTILITIES					
	Water	Scottish Water	Update Required	https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Your-Home/Your-Water	No (normally direct developer provision)
	Foul Wastewater	Scottish Water	Update Required	https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Your-Home/Your-Waste-Water	No (normally direct developer provision)
	Surface Water	Scottish Water, THC, SEPA	Review of Flood risk and drainage SG	https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Business-and-Developers/NEW-Connecting-to-Our-Network/Developing-housing-and-commercial-properties/Preparing/Surface-Water-Policy	No (normally direct developer provision)
	Flood Risk	Scottish Water, THC, SEPA	Review of Flood risk and drainage SG	https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/In-Your-Area/Flooding-Information/Flood-Risk-Management https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/81/flooding/2 https://www2.sepa.org.uk/frmplans/	No (normally direct developer provision)
	Gas	SGN – Scottish Gas Network	Update Required	https://www.sgn.co.uk/	No (normally direct developer provision)
	Electricity	SSE	Update Required	https://www.sse.com/	No (normally direct developer provision)
	Telephone / Digital	Open Reach, EE, O2, Vodafone,	Update Required	https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council_information_performance_and_statistics/1041/digital_strategy	No (normally direct developer provision)

		Airwave (Emergency Services)		https://www.hie.co.uk/	

D. What evidence can promoters of development sites provide?

To help prepare a finalised Evidence Report, and address other issues outlined iun this emerging evidence report, the Council intends to run a Call for Sites exercise in early 2025. Leading up to this a separate consultation on the Site Submission Template will be run late 2024 seeking views on the range of information that will be sought from developers as part of the Call for Sites process. The onus will be on development proponents to assess the infrastructure impacts of their particular site(s)/proposal(s). Appendix 2 of the Housing & Economy section shows the proposed Site Submission Template that details the evidence expected to be provided.

This will allow the Council to more fully consider the following issues for each type of infrastructure at area or sub-regional level:

- Overview of current provision, including assets that might be affected by climate change;
- Current and future infrastructure needs, priorities and gaps in provision - based on adopted LDPs (and Delivery Programmes) and advice from infrastructure partners identified in the table above;
- Options for making best use of assets;
- Scope for potential expansion or enhancement including funding;
- The implications of the Council's Community Hubs concept;
- The challenges for urban and rural areas; and,
- How can infrastructure be delivered sustainably in relation to the climate and ecological emergency?

3 Transport and Connectivity

Key headlines

This section confirms that the Local Transport Strategy, for which work has commenced, will be a key consideration for the new Local Development Plan's transport strategy and policies. It also highlights that a Transport Appraisal is likely to be required in the build up to the Proposed Plan. There are also considered to be opportunities to align the Delivery Programmes for each document.

Transport and Connectivity

1. **Headline and Introduction**

What does travel look like in a future sustainable and resilient Highland? How can we ensure people can access the things they need more sustainably in the concentrated City Region and across our widely dispersed communities?

1.1. The information in this paper describes our understanding of the sources of information that can tell us about transport and connectivity in Highland, as well as what information is missing, to fulfil existing ambitious national and local policies for transport and climate change. However, first if all, to help identify these relevant issues, and how the new Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP) needs to address them, section 2 of the report starts by looking at the wider policy requirements at the national, regional and local level, in order to arrive at a suggested approach to using these sources to inform the new plan.

2. **Policy Context**

2.1. The following is an overview of the national, regional and local strategic transport policies that help to shape the suggested approach that the new HLDP needs to take to contribute towards the delivery of sustainable transport.

2.2. Before summarising the national policy considerations, it is worth highlighting that the Council's Local Transport Strategy (LTS), which is out of date, is now under review and there is a joined approach to the LTS and the HLDP to ensure that the inter-relationship between these two documents is addressed through the vision, strategy and policies for transport and land use. In particular, this evidence paper is being considered as part of the LTS review which is planned to coincide partly with this evidence paper being published for consultation. The process for interaction between the LTS and HLDP is outlined further from paragraph 2.29 below.

National

National Planning Framework 4

2.3. NPF4 provides a broad spatial strategy and national policies to inform travel and transport.

Policies

2.4. *Policy 13 Sustainable Transport* is the key policy for this topic. It intends to encourage, promote and facilitate development that prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport for everyday travel and reduce the need to travel unsustainably. It requires LDPs to:

- Prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes
- Spatial strategies should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy and sustainable investment hierarchy by making the best use of existing infrastructure and services
- Promote a place-based approach to consider how to reduce car-dominance, this could include: low traffic schemes, shared transport options, designing-in speed controls, bus//cycle priority, pedestrianisation and minimising space dedicated to car parking
- Consideration to be given to the type, mix and use of development
- Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods
- Car ownership levels
- Accessibility of proposals and allocations by sustainable modes
- Accessibility for users of all abilities

2.5. In terms of evidence it requires LDPs to be informed by an appropriate and effective transport appraisal undertaken in line with relevant transport appraisal guidance. It explains that Plans should be informed by evidence of area's transport infrastructure capacity, and an appraisal of the spatial strategy on the transport network. Any potential cumulative transport impacts should be identified and deliverable mitigation proposed to inform the plan's infrastructure first approach. Where there is likely to be an impact on the trunk or rail network, early engagement with Transport Scotland is required.

2.6. *Policy 15 Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods* is closely related to sustainable transport. The intent of the policy is to encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the Place Principle and create connected and compact neighbourhoods where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by walking, wheeling or cycling or using sustainable transport options.

2.7. It requires LDPs to support local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. It explains that the approach should take into account the local context, consider the varying settlement patterns and reflect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place.

2.8. *Policy 18 Infrastructure First* is also a key policy related to the provision of sustainable transport. This policy intends to encourage, promote and facilitate an infrastructure first approach to land use planning, which puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking. It requires LDPs and delivery programmes to be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach, and requires that plans should:
• be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
• set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
• indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

2.9. There are key policy connections with numerous other NPF4 policies including: Policy 1 Tackling Climate and Nature crises, Policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaptation and Policy 16 Quality Homes.

National Developments

2.10. NPF4 contains eighteen national developments. These are significant developments of national importance that will help to deliver NPF4's spatial strategy.

2.11. A national development relevant to sustainable transport in Highland is number eight – 'National Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Network.' This national development is Scotland wide. It facilitates the shift from vehicles to walking, cycling and wheeling for everyday journeys contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport and it is highly beneficial for health and wellbeing. It will significantly support modal shift and deliver multiple outcomes including the Scottish Government's commitment to a 20% reduction on car kilometres by 2030, associated emissions reduction, health and air quality improvement.

Spatial Strategy

2.12. NPF4's Regional Spatial Priorities for both 'North and West Coast and Islands' and 'North' are relevant to Highland. Important transport related extracts of these areas spatial priorities are set out below.

'North and West Coast and Islands'

2.13. It identifies key centres that provide access to islands, including Wick, Thurso, Ullapool and Mallaig. It recognises a number of significant challenges that will continue in the area, including transport and that fuel and transport poverty is a particular challenge towards the north and west.

'North'

2.14. Key centres listed in this section within Highland are Inverness, Ullapool and Dingwall, Grantown-on-Spey and Aviemore (the latter two lie within the Cairngorms National Park that is responsible for preparing its own LDP). It recognises car dependence in this area and that more limited access to services creates disadvantage.

National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2)

2.15. NTS2 was published in 2020. It sets out an ambitious vision for Scotland's transport system for the next 20 years. The vision is underpinned by four interconnected priorities: Reduces Inequalities, Takes Climate Action, Helps Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth and Improve our Health and Wellbeing.

2.16. It recognises that planning and development has a major influence on our transport system and emphasises that planning decisions should give priority to considerations on the impacts on transport.

2.17. The HLDP will promote and adhere to NTS2 and its associated Delivery Plan. The principles of its sustainable travel and sustainable investment hierarchies will be embedded within the plan.

Strategic Transport Review 2 (STPR2)

2.18. STPR2 was published in 2022 and details how it will help to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes set out in NTS2 and aligns with other national plans including the Climate Change Plan and NPF4.

2.19. It sets out 45 recommendations which will help inform Scottish Minsters on a programme of potential transport investment opportunities for the period 2022-2042.

2.20. Recommendations 1 and 3 – 10 are applicable across the whole of Scotland with the aim to encourage a behaviour change to more sustainable modes of travel. Recommendations 21 – 23, 25 – 28 and 30 - 38 are also relevant to decarbonise transport, improve public transport and increase safety and resilience on the network.

2.21. A small number of recommendations are specific to Highland:

- (15) Highland Mainline Rail Corridor Enhancements is specific to the Highland. This includes new and longer passing loops with more flexibility and permissible speed increases on the Highland Mainline.
- (32) Trunk Road and Motorway Renewal for Reliability, Resilience and Safety includes reference to the development of an integrated transport plan for Fort William.

2.22. Other recommendations that are applicable to multiple regions, but will have a particular benefit to Highland are:

- (2) Active Freeway and Cycle Parking Hubs
- (18) Supporting Integrated Journeys at Ferry Terminals
- (42) Investment in Port Infrastructure to Support Vessel Renewal and Replacement and Progressive Decarbonisation (no spatial references)

- (43) Major Station Masterplans includes the redevelopment of Inverness Railway Station.
- (44) Rail Freight Terminals and Facilities recognises that the sufficient provision of rail freight terminals is critical to achieving a significant shift of freight from road to rail

Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland, A route map to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030 (2022)

2.23. The world-leading target of reducing car kilometres by 20 per cent by 2030 was set out in the Climate Change Plan Update (CCPu). The route map outlines that reducing car use is essential in order for the transport system to be decarbonised at a pace that meets the statutory emissions targets by the Scottish Parliament.

2.24. The four key desired behaviours identified are: reducing the need to travel, living well locally, switching modes and combining or sharing car trips. It acknowledges the role of planning system in prioritising and targeting car-use reduction, particularly with regard to the delivery of development that embeds the principles of local living.

Regional

Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

2.25. Highland and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) RTS was published in 2008. A refresh of the Regional Transport Strategy was undertaken in 2018.

2.26. A full update of the RTS is currently underway. The Draft RTS was published in April 2024. The Draft RTS sets the strategic framework for the development of transport in our region over the next 20 years.

2.27. The vision of the Draft RTS is as follows: Our transport networks and services will act to realise the economic potential of our region through reducing the actual and perceived impacts of distance, poor resilience and low population density. By doing this, they will facilitate economically and socially valuable activities for all, provide equality of opportunity, enable people to live active and healthy lives and allow our region to contribute fully to the national net zero emissions target.

2.28. The RTS also contains a series of strategy objectives that define the outcomes that the RTS is trying to achieve. They are as follows:

- Strategy Objective 1: To make a just transition to a post-carbon and more environmentally sustainable transport network.
- Strategy Objective 2: To transform and provide safe and accessible connections between and within our city, towns and villages, to enable walking, wheeling and cycling for all.
- Strategy Objective 3: To widen access to public and shared transport and improve connectivity within and from / to the region.
- Strategy Objective 4: To improve the quality and integration of public and shared transport within and from / to the region.
- Strategy Objective 5: To ensure reliable, resilient, affordable and sustainable connectivity for all from / to our island, peninsular and remote communities.
- Strategy Objective 6: To improve the efficiency, safety and resilience of our transport networks for people and freight and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

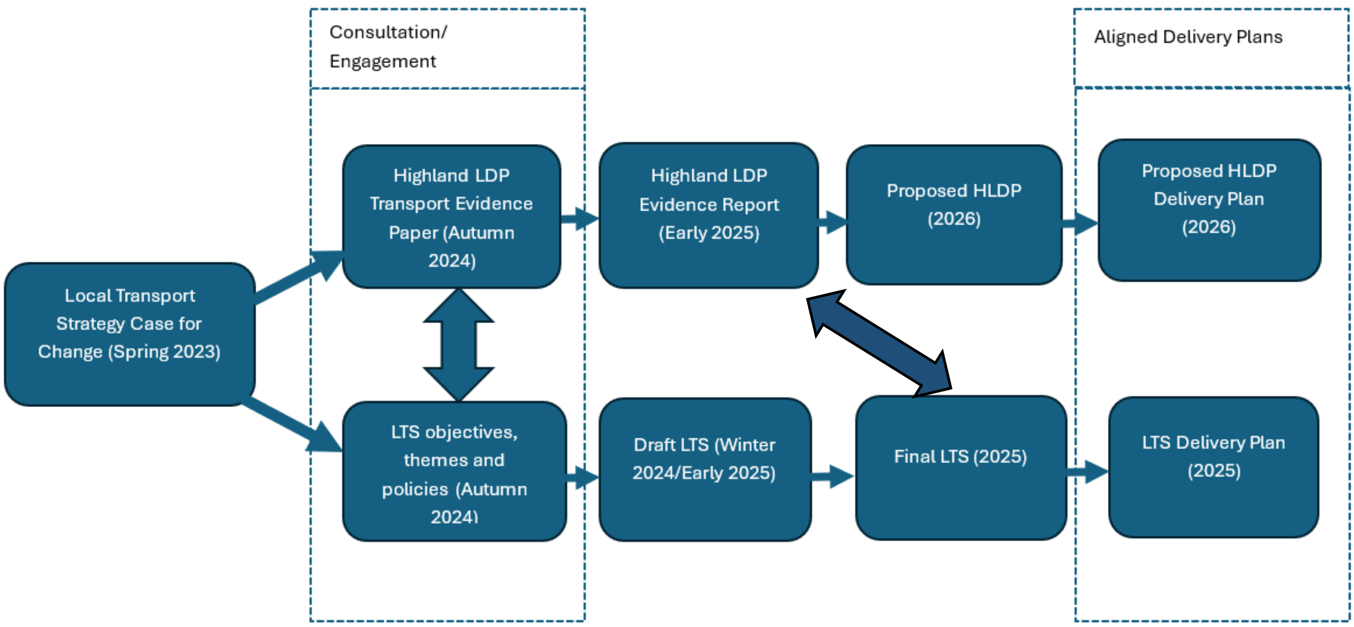
Local

Local Transport Strategy (LTS)

2.29. The Council's Local Transport Strategy 2010/11-2013/14 is now out of date. The Case for Change for the Council's new LTS was published in 2023. This paper is intended to act as a more up to date status report on transport in Highland that sits alongside the LTS Case for Change. These two sources of evidence explain the current transport context in Highland and identify the transport problems faced and current opportunities that exist. Based on its analysis, the Case for Change report proposes a series of high-level outcomes for transport, known as Transport Planning Objectives.

2.30. The diagram below illustrates how the LTS and HLDP are intended to complement each other. The Case for Change combined with this evidence paper, as well as the Council's Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (outlined further below), are intended to shape a new draft LTS that is being prepared alongside the consultation on the HLDP evidence proposed for late 2024 to early 2025. Interested parties are encouraged to participate in that LTS engagement in November 2024 because the draft LTS that emerges is intended to be a key consideration for the Evidence Report and ultimately the transport policy context for the Proposed HLDP. Alongside the LTS a separate Transport Appraisal will be required and this is likely to be commissioned ahead of the Evidence Report. The diagram below will be updated to clearly show the role of the transport appraisal as evidence for the new HLDP.

2.31. The Local Development Plan Delivery Programme is also a key document that will help to enable key infrastructure to be provided consistent with infrastructure first principles, as well as informing the LTS Delivery Programmes and aiding the delivery of its strategy and policies. Although the two documents are required to carry out different functions, there are potential opportunities to coordinate the Deliver Programmes. This is outlined further in the Infrastructure Evidence paper.



Active Transport Strategy (ATS) and Active Travel Masterplans

2.32. The ATS was published in 2024 and outlines the Council's vision to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for more people, more often, for more their everyday journeys.

2.33. Active Travel Masterplans have been published for the Highland settlements listed below. These identify a series of actions to the transition to low carbon transport.

- Alness and Invergordon
- Dingwall
- Fort William
- Inverness
- Nairn
- Portree
- Tain
- Thurso
- Wick

Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy

2.34. The Highland Council has developed an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (IRSS) in 2020 as part of its response to the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) that was being prepared at that time. This IRSS showcased the unique set of assets and resources that the Highlands will contribute to the national setting and how Highland Council will collaborate with the Scottish Government and partner agencies to deliver on strategic national development priorities, national outcomes and delivery mechanisms to achieve a long-term sustainable vision for Highland in the period to 2050. It identified key transport improvements essential to facilitating growth in Highland, including major and other trunk and strategic road improvements; rail corridor improvements and important ferry routes.

Local Development Plans

2.35. An integral component of the Council's Highland-wide Local Development Plan and three adopted area local development plans is the desire to integrate transport and land use planning. The most recently published area local development plan, the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2, is supported by an ambitious new transport strategy that aims to ensure the creation of a modern, sustainable transport network through robust policy and the delivery of spatially defined transport interventions.

2.36. Different levels of information relating to transport were prepared to support the area local development plans, reflective of the different natural, demographic and development pressures faced in each area. These past studies are listed in the links to evidence section below and have been reviewed to inform this evidence paper and will also inform the future transport appraisal to support the plan.

Local Place Plans

2.37. Local Place Plans are community-led plans that set out proposals for the development and use of land. Preparation of a number of Local Place Plans is underway in Highland, and a small number have been validated. It is clear from the validated and emerging Local Place Plans that transport is a fundamental issue for local communities. Many identify current transport issues and priorities for improvement, with common themes emerging on prioritising public and active transport enhancements.

3. Key Implications of Evidence for the Plan

3.1. In light of national requirements summarised in section 2, and the more recent local policies and strategies outlined above, the approach to gathering transport evidence to draft the new plan can be summarised as follows:

- The headline need to integrate the LTS and LDP will be addressed as set out in from paragraph 2.29 above. The Council has agreed to review its LTS and this is scheduled to be available at a time that it can be reflected and aligned with the Proposed HLDP next year. The evidence gathered to date in this paper will also be used to inform that LTS. This means that the Proposed HLDP will be based on the most up to date transport evidence and national and local policies. Readers are encourage to take an active part in the forthcoming LTS consultation.

- The Council is urgently seeking certainty on nationally led infrastructure projects that fundamentally determine whether development can progress in certain parts of Highland, particular in Inverness, the A9 and A96 corridors, including Easter Ross. There is concern about the inter-relationship between major employment developments such as the Inverness and Cromarty Forth Green Freeport (ICFGF), electricity grid upgrades and the ability to support the major infrastructure and housing need to keep pace. With such uncertainty in some areas it is felt that different scenarios need to be considered for future development.
- The national, regional and local policy, as well as transport data will shape other aspects of the LDP as described below.
- The Local Living tool provides an extremely useful set of data that will:
    - Provide a critical steer over the understanding of how parts of the region and individual settlements are operating – some of those observations are set out in the Area Profiles which contains an overview of the finding of local living data. These will also be used to help update and refine the settlement hierarchy once we have considered the transport issues in each community and the inter-relationships with each other.
    - Allow local living to be one factor for the assessing the options for directions for growth in individual settlements and the suitability of sites for future development. The methodology was subject to consultation, and will also help inform decision making on new development proposals prior to the preparation of the Proposed HLDP.
- A number of other considerations will inform the assessment of options within settlements – for example how well a direction for growth or site fits with the current active travel masterplan, public transport network, and proposed improvements to such facilities and services. There is also a significant role for prospective developers to carry out work to demonstrate how they will align with these new transport policies. The developer form to be issued for candidate sites will require such information to be provided to demonstrate the suitability of sites for development in this way.
- Baseline information and data about the transport infrastructure, capacity and projects by mode in Highland can be found at appendix 1. This information will combine with the overview of transport issues in the Area Profiles to inform our updated RSS, the wider transport strategy and the transport strategy for specific sub-regions and settlements. It also informs what measures would need to be addressed in support of development. The information presented in Appendix 1 will be taken into consideration in planning future development.
- A transport appraisal that builds on the data and evidence established in the Evidence Report provided within published data sources and from Transport Scotland will be required to inform the content of the Proposed HLDP. Initial discussions have taken place with Transport Scotland, where it was agreed that the future plan has potential to impact the strategic transport network. It is intended continue discussions with Transport Scotland and other relevant transport stakeholders throughout the plan preparation process to ensure the nature and scale of the transport appraisal is appropriate. Transport Scotland's Development Planning and Management Guidance, and any future updates to this, as well as a review of existing Highland Local Development Plan Transport Appraisals will also inform the content of the HLDP transport appraisal.

Q1. Do you agree with our proposed approach to using data and analysis about how the network currently operates and how it performs?

Q2. As a source of evidence what regard should we have to aspects of current policy (particularly recently adopted)? Should this evidence be relied upon to inform the new HLDP?

Appendix 1 – Overview of Transport Infrastructure, Capacity and Projects by Mode

This appendix provides an overview of different modes of travel in terms of infrastructure, capacity and trends and planned improvements. Similar issues for transport and connectivity are also picked up in more detail in the Area Profiles.

Active Travel

Active travel refers to any mode of travel which is all or mostly people-powered, including walking, wheeling, using a mobility aid, and cycling, including e-bikes.

Infrastructure

The Highland Council area has an extensive network of active travel routes. The Council manages almost 1,700km of footways and many more are maintained and managed privately. These routes are in a number of forms, including rights of way, core paths and national cycle network routes.

Further information and map to follow

Capacity/Trends

The Inverness Walking and Cycling Index 2023 found that 49% of residents walk or wheel, and 9% cycle, on five or more days a week.

Further information to follow

Projects

In recent years, funding for active travel in Scotland has been at record levels. Places for Everyone (PfE), Active Travel Infrastructure Funding (ATIF), United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF), Highland Council Active Travel Capital Budget and other funding streams allowed current, new and emerging projects to be developed whilst prioritising future workflow linked to the priorities of the Inner Moray Firth (IMF) Active Travel Masterplan and Highland Wide Masterplans (HWM).

The Council's Active Travel Team Workflow 2024/25 provides an overview of a range of planned active travel projects throughout Highland, including funding sources and progress to date.

Further information and map to follow

Rail

Infrastructure

Highland is served by five railway lines and 60 passenger stations. These are listed and shown on figure X below. The rail network moves goods and people for both long-distances with ScotRail, LNER and Caledonian Sleeper Services providing UK-wide connectivity from the Highlands as far as London, as well as shorter-distance commuter services within Highland.

Far North Line (Wick/Thurso – Inverness)	Stations: Thurso, Wick, Georgemas Junction, Scotscaler, Altnabreac, Forsinard, Kinbrace, Kidonan, Helmsdale, Brora, Dunrobin Castle, Golspie, Rogart, Lairg, Invershin, Culrain, Ardgay, Tain, Fearn, Invergordon, Alness, Dingwall, Conon Bridge, Muir of Ord, Beauly, Inverness
Kyle Line (Kyle of Lochalsh to Inverness)	Kyle of Lochalsh, Duirinish, Plockton, Duncraig, Stromeferry, Attadale, Strathcarron, Achnashellach, Achnasheen, Achanalt, Lochluichart, Garve, Dingwall, Conon Bridge, Muir of Ord, Beauly, Inverness

Inverness to Aberdeen Line	Inverness, Inverness Airport, Nairn (subsequent stations out with Highland)
West Highland Line (Glasgow to Fort William/Mallaig)	Mallaig, Morar, Arisaig, Beasdale, Lochailort, Glenfinnan, Locheilside, Loch Eil Outward Bound, Corpach, Banavie, Fort William, Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge, Tulloch, Corrour (subsequent stations out with Highland)
Highland Main Line (Inverness to Perth)	Inverness, Carrbridge, Aviemore, Kingussie, Newtonmore, Dalwhinnie (subsequent stations out with Highland)

Further information and map to follow

Capacity

Between 2012-13 to 2023-23 overall entries and exits to rail stations in Highland decreased by approximately 21% (Office for Road and Rail Data). Inverness saw a 24% decrease in entries and exits. Rail travel was profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and daily activity in place for large parts of 2020. While passenger journeys have been recovering, for many parts of Highland they remain less than 2019 (pre-pandemic) (Transport Scotland (2023) Scottish Transport Statistics).

A number of stations did see increases in passengers since 2012-13, including Aviemore, Glenfinnan and Fort William. There were significant increases and decreases at numerous rural stations, however given the small number of passengers these statistics are less meaningful to illustrate wider trends.

Despite a drop in passengers, Inverness continues to be the busiest station in Highland, followed approximately in order of scale of settlements that stations serve. Two new stations have opened in Highland since the HwLDP was adopted in 2012. Conon Bridge Station re-opened in 2013 and until the COVID 19 pandemic saw a steady increase in passengers (Office for Road and Rail Data). Inverness Airport Station opened in February 2023.

Further information to follow

The Local Transport Strategy Case for Change (Highland Council, 2023) explains that journey times outwith sub-regions in Highland tend to be longer than the equivalent time required to travel by private car.

Projects

Planned strategic rail improvement projects are summarised below:

- Redevelopment of Inverness Railway Station to improve the station's operational functionality as well as integrating the station better with its locality (STPR2 recommendation 43 Major Station Masterplans).
- Highland Mainline Rail Corridor Enhancements - This includes new and longer passing loops with more flexibility and permissible speed increases (STPR2 recommendation 15). Currently it is understood that there is no funding commitments in the Scottish Governments Programme for Government for further phases of this project.
- Far North Line Review Group - remit to identify potential opportunities to improve connectivity, operational performance and journey time on the line. Have implemented a number of improvements and further improvements are planned.
- West Highland Line Review Group – remit to identify timetable improvements, consider infrastructure options and subsequently promote appropriate projects for future investment for passengers and freight. Understood the group plans to reconvene in the near future.

Transport and Connectivity

The only Highland area Local Development Plan that references the potential for new rail stations is the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2. It identifies opportunities at the following locations:

- East Inverness (referenced in with Inverness East Development Brief)
- Evanton
- Tomatin

The IMFLDP2 acknowledges that a Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) study would be required to explore potential for reinstating/creating these stations.

HITRANS have and continue to commission to a number of studies that explore the potential for improved provision of rail services across the HITRANS area. Brief details of relevant studies are listed below:

- Fort Transit Appraisal Study (2023) – explores potential options for local rail services in the Fort William area.
- Evanton Station Technical Feasibility Study (2024) – investigation of the technical and operational feasibility of introducing a new rail station at Evanton on the Far North Line.
- Inverness Rail East (2020) – New station initial feasibility study.
- Route and Branch: HITRANS Rail Strategy is intended to commissioned in 2024/25. The study will identify shortcomings in the rail network and areas for development so that the railway plays its role in the move to Net Zero. Key to this will be decarbonised rolling stock and efficient freight on rail.

Rail also serves a wider public transport integration function in the network, where multi-modal journeys begin and end at rail stations. This means Highland could further benefit from supporting infrastructure to integrate rail more with other modes, including active travel, bus, demand-responsive transport, ferries at Mallaig and Scrabster, and private car, where appropriate. Work on such aspects is identified in various workstreams, including in the Active Travel Workflow Programme for 2024 – 2025.

Rail Freight

Rail freight contributes to removing heavy goods vehicles from the road and creating efficiencies in the distribution network. Rail freight is an important aspect of decarbonising the network, particularly in light of the Scottish Government's Rail Services Decarbonisation Plan (2020). It also offers the opportunity to reduce the impacts of road-based freight for maintenance and congestion, which are particularly important, given the length of roads that require to be maintained in Highland and the extent that do not facilitate safe over-taking slower vehicles such as HGVs.

The figure below illustrates the extent and type of rail freight existing and emerging across Highland. It is a successful mode of transport for freight for the Highland region, despite limitations in the existing rail network. Further detail of existing and future potential freight hubs in Highland are provided below:

Existing

- Needlefield Rail Yard, Inverness – used by organisations including Tesco freight service and Tarmac to transport cement to Inverness from Dunbar, potential for further integration.
- Georgemas Junction strategic rail freight and transport hub, Caithness – used to support the movement of materials from the former Dounreay Nuclear Power Station and Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment. The Caithness and Sutherland LDP recognises potential for growth as a rail freight and transport hub.
- Fort William Alumina Freight – used for transportation of alumina powder from Blyth to Fort William for processing.

Potential

- Altnabreac Lineside Freight Facility, Caithness – potential for development of loading area for timber haulage, received planning consent in 2021.
- West Fraser, Dalcross – rail link to timber processing facility completed in 2023, rail sidings and other additional infrastructure in planning stages.
- Highland Deephaven, Evanton – the IMFLDP2 explains there is potential for a spur off the Farr North Railway Line and rail halt to be created to serve industrial operations.

Opportunities for sustainable modes of transport of goods and people to support growth are being explored as part of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, including at Highland Deephaven as described above. Locations for lineside loading of timber are being explored at a number of other locations in Highland.

Further information and map to follow - existing and potential freight locations

Potential for Disused Railway Infrastructure

As part of the LDP planning authorities should have regard to the desirability of preserving disused railway infrastructure for the purpose of ensuring its availability for possible future public transport or active travel requirements.

There is an extensive network of disused railway lines across Highland. It is understood it would be significantly challenging for disused railway infrastructure in Highland to be reused for public transport purposes due to locations being largely out with large centres of population, fragmented landownership and level of investment required. However, many routes are already being used for the purposes of active travel and potential remains for improvements to many of these routes.

A summary of existing routes and current limitations is provided in the table below.

Route	Description
Speyside Way	Uses sections of the old Strathspey Railway. Currently used sections are Tormore to Cragganmore, Nethy Bridge to Spey Bridge and Cromdale to Easter Pollowick. Challenges to using other sections. A small section of this route is within Highland and out with the CNPA.
Dava Way	Complete active travel route on the former Highland Railway between Grantown and Forres. A small section of this route is within Highland and out with the CNPA.
Great Glen Way	Uses sections of the old Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway that ran between Fort Augustus and Spean Bridge. Currently used section Laggan to Aberchalder. Other sections are interrupted by development, missing bridges and other constraints.
Black Isle Railway	Uses sections of the old Muir of Ord to Fortrose Railway. Used in parts, other sections are interrupted by various constraints.
Peffery Way	Former Dingwall to Strathpeffer Railway. Opportunities for reopening this branch line were explored in the past. In recent years it has become a high quality active travel route that, with the exception of one section, is now complete.
Puggy Line	Old Lochaber Narrow Guage Railway from the Fort William Aluminium Smelter to the River Cour south of Spean Bridge. Limited sections currently in use for active travel, other sections are interrupted by broken bridges and other constraints.

Map to follow

Transport and Connectivity

Bus

Infrastructure

Bus services across Highland and beyond are provided by several operators. A number of operators provide longer distance services to other Scottish cities and towns, including Citylink and Megabus. There are a number of operators of local bus services including Stagecoach, and notably The Highland Council has also operated a number of local services over the last 2 years that have bolstered the availability and frequency of services in many areas.

Bus routes cover almost all the strategic routes and significant settlements in Highland however, many have a limited timetable which can make travelling to work difficult. In certain areas the timetabled network is supplemented by demand responsive transport for example dial-a-bus services.

Capacity

National Transport Strategy recognises that bus patronage is declining and trends show that this pattern of decline is also true for the extent of services available. Even before the negative impacts of Covid-19 on public transport were experienced, decline was being experienced. This is particularly problematic for Highland because lower patronage results in a negative pattern of further decline.

The Scottish Household Survey (2022) found that 82% of Highland respondents had not used a local bus service in the past month. This is significantly higher than the national rate of 63%. This is reflective of Scottish Transport Statistics common findings are that bus use is higher in urban areas and lower in rural areas.

The Inverness Walking and Cycling Index 2023 showed over a third of residents would like to use public transport more, and almost a third would like to drive less.

Further information and map to follow - data on commercial service and Dial-a-bus usage

There is uncertainty over future trends. Changes include increased fuel costs, impacts and recovery from Covid-19, and public sector interventions being implemented to promote public transport including: concessionary travel for under-22s introduced in 2022. Investment in improvements to the bus fleet in certain areas, such as the electrification of the Inverness fleet, offer more attractive, higher quality experiences for the travelling public, as well as significantly reducing associated pollution.

Projects

Bus Service Improvement Partnerships are intended to support improvements in bus services by partnership working between local authorities and bus operators. Highland Council, HITRANS and Bus Operators were currently working on the formation of a formal BSIP for Inner Moray Firth and Lochaber. To enable councils to invest in facilities, the Scottish Government introduced a Bus Partnership Fund. The BPF consisted of ten projects (listed below) some of which required further investigative work before proceeding (subject to a gateway review by Transport Scotland) to progress to design and construction phases through the use of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG). One project was delivered, a bus gate connecting Raigmore Hospital and Raigmore Housing Estate in Inverness. Due to the Bus Partnership Fund being paused for financial year 2024/25 no further work is presently being undertaken on these projects.

Inner Moray Firth Projects

- Raigmore Bus Gate (complete)
- Barn Church Road Bus Priority
- Rose Street Enforcement Camera
- City Centre Traffic Light Priority
- Connecting Inverness (STAG Appraisal)

- B9006 Bus Priority (STAG Appraisal)
- Millburn Corridor Bus Priority & Active Travel (STAG Appraisal)

Lochaber

- Blar Mhor Bus Gate
- Upper Achintore Bus Gate
- Lochaber (STAG Appraisal)

Details of any other bus projects to follow

Ferry

Infrastructure

Ferry services are a key part of the transport network in Highland. The principal services are:

- Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) operate ferries from the Highland mainland and Skye to the Western Isles, Mull, the Small Isles and Raasay, and from Mallaig to Skye.
- Highland Council operates the Corran Ferry and has contracts for ferries on the following routes Cromarty – Nigg, and Camusnagaul – Fort William and Malliag – Inverie – Tarbet.
- Northlink operate Scrabster – Stromness (Orkney) route.
- Pentland Ferries and John O'Groats Ferries operate other ferries to Orkney.

Other privately run services also operate, some on a seasonal basis.

Capacity/Trends

Ferry services provide for a mix of day-to-day travel and the movement of goods focussed on island residents and businesses, and seasonal tourist travel, both by island residents themselves travelling more in the summer and visitors to the islands. This leads to a highly seasonal demand profile on many routes in the region. The Corran Ferry is the busiest single-vessel ferry route in Scotland and carries more than 270,000 cars each year.

Summer demand can cause capacity problems on many routes with summer carryings five to seven times that of winter. Ferry services are not easily 'scalable' to this extent which means that it is challenging to meet this summer demand without providing substantial excess capacity in the winter months. Capacity constraints on the ferry network are overwhelmingly associated with the carriage of vehicles, and on some routes high freight demand. Passenger capacity is very rarely a problem.

On many routes however, capacity is inadequate at peak times. Whilst emergency short notice travel by island residents is almost always accommodated by operators, island residents can on occasions find that they are unable to secure a booking as, for example, tourists can often book much further in advance. This can limit access to mainland services and inconvenience e.g., travel for leisure, visiting friends and relatives, teams travelling for sports fixtures etc.

Latest available passenger figures to follow

Projects

- Uig Harbour – upgrade of harbour facilities, including new terminal buildings, to accommodate a new ferry vessel. Planned completion spring 2025.
- Corran Narrows Crossing – construction of new infrastructure on the Ardgour and Nether Lochaber sides of the Corran Narrows to improve the Corran Ferry service and support the operation of a new electric vessel. Currently at planning stages, intended to be operational by 2027.

Details of any other projects to follow

Transport and Connectivity

Ports and Harbours

Highland is responsible for 21% of Scotland's coastline, which equates to 4,905 km. It benefits from a large network of marine infrastructure, from small-scale boat accesses such as slipways, to major ports. The Highland Council is responsible for a significant number of these facilities, which are mostly of a smaller scale, whilst a range of private and trust organisations operate larger-scale facilities such as Glensanda (marine-access only superquarry freight).

Inverness and Cromarty Ports support the movement of goods, products and people in and out of the region, with Cromarty in the top eleven ports in Scotland serving these functions and enabling significant cruise ship passenger numbers to visit the Highlands.

Capacity/Trends

Sea ports already serve a key role in facilitating the transport of onshore wind turbine components, that are then transported by road to their final destination. This is a large industry that Highland regularly receives proposals for and, coupled with the potential of repowering of existing onshore wind energy installations, means Highland ports and harbours will continue to serve and important role. The offshore wind industry, will also place major demands on port infrastructure across Highland, with larger facilities particularly important during the construction phase, and other facilities able to offer long-term opportunities for the operations and maintenance phases.

Projects

- Staffin Harbour - construction of a 3,000sq onshore hardstanding area, new onshore facilities, an upgraded access road and provision of electricity.
- Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport – associated ports are likely to be required to be upgraded to facilitate growth. Proposals are at various stages, including Ardersier Port where construction is underway of a quay wall and quayside and Nigg where a new quay is planned.

Canals

There is one navigable Canal in Highland – the circa 90-mile Caledonian Canal, which connects the Fort William area (Banavie) with Inverness (Clachnaharry and Muirtown Basin).

The canal is predominantly use for leisure purposes. The HITRANS Case for Change (2022) identifies there could be a future role for the Caledonian Canal in the handing of freight associated with the development of pumped hydro storage schemes.

Aviation

Infrastructure

Aviation in Highland provides both international connectivity to the region and regional connectivity to more remote and rural parts of Highland and the rest of Scotland. There are two airports from which commercial flights operate in Highland: Inverness and Wick John O'Groats.

Inverness Airport acts as a vital link to many Scottish communities and visitors to the region. It provides a route network to the Scottish islands, a number of major cities in the UK and to Amsterdam. It also provides seasonal flights to Majorca.

Wick Airport is supported by a Public Service Obligation, similar to those in place for island communities; this provides necessary support for rural communities to make longer distances by air, where they would otherwise be disadvantaged. This airport currently operates flights to Aberdeen.

Other airfields operate within Highland, including at Ashhaig, Doronch and Plockton that are owned and operated by the Highland Council. These operate as unlicensed, unmanned aerodromes and have no Air Traffic Control/Flight Information Service or Rescue / Fire Fighting services available.

Capacity

Inverness airport has experienced a 61% increase in passenger numbers between 2009 and 2019, with 89% of passengers travelling domestically, and the remaining 11% internationally (2018 statistics CAA statistics). This highlights the airport's particularly important role as a hub for the Highlands and Islands region.

Further information to follow

Projects

- Inverness Airport Masterplan – expansion of airport facilities including passenger terminal, land-side and surface access and airfield infrastructure.
- Ashaig Airport, Skye - Airstrip improvements to accommodate reintroduction of scheduled air services.

Roads

Infrastructure

The Highland area has an extensive road network with a core trunk road network linking the main settlements and providing connections to major towns and cities outwith Highland. Trunk roads are managed by Transport Scotland and their maintenance contractors. Over a quarter of the total trunk road network in Scotland is within the Highland Council area[1]. The following trunk roads lie wholly or partially within Highland:

- A9 from Perth to Thurso
- A835 from Inverness to Ullapool
- A96 from Inverness to Aberdeen
- A86 from Dalwhinnie to Spean Bridge
- A82 from Dumbarton to Inverness
- A828 Oban to Ballachullish
- A830 Fort William to Mallaig
- A95 Aviemore to Keith
- A87 Invergarry to Uig
- A887 Invermoriston to A87

Further information and map to follow

The Highland Council manages all other adopted roads which equates to almost 7,000 kilometres. This extensive network of transport infrastructure also hosts traffic management systems, various signage, footways and cycleways alongside adopted roads, drainage, road markings, road restraint systems and a range of street furniture.

Capacity/Trends/Known Issues

In 2022 16% of households in Highland did not have access to a car[2]. This is lower than the national rate of 25% of households.

---

[1] Transport Scotland (https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-no-39-2020-edition/chapter-4-road-network/) accessed 7/8/24
[2] Transport Scotland, Road Vehicles Dataset (https://statistics.gov.scot/data/road-vehicles) accessed 9/10/24

Transport and Connectivity

Other key statistics to follow

An Inner Moray Firth Modal Shift Strategy was commissioned by THC and HITRANS to understand the travel mode share in the IMF Plan area and investigate what the most viable, effective options are for achieving a shift towards sustainable travel. The aim of this work was to provide evidence to root the plan in the sustainable travel hierarchy reflected in NTS2. The study estimated that, due to the combined effects of an increase in average age and a decrease in car ownership because of a shift to demand responsive transport services, there was potential for 42% of all trips in Inverness to be by non-car modes by 2030. This represents a significant increase in comparison to current trends.

In responding to the Proposed IMFLDP2 Transport Scotland expressed concern regarding potential cumulative impacts on certain A9 trunk road junctions as a result of development allocations in Alness, Invergordon and Tain. Early engagement will take place with Transport Scotland on the evidence needed on potential impacts on the A9 and its junctions.

Projects

The trunk road projects listed below are identified most recently published Highland LDP Delivery Programme. The status of each is highlighted below along with the expected delivery timescale.

- A9 Dualling Perth to Inverness - Phased upgrading of road from single to dual carriageway up to end of 2035. A new Delivery Plan for the A9 was announced in Parliament in December 2023. The Tomatin to Moy 9.6km £184.7M section contract was awarded in July 2024 and the section to be open by the end of 2027. The remaining sections within Highland are expected to be dualled between 2033 and 2035.
- A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen - Phased upgrading of road from single to dual carriageway including Nairn Bypass. Orders for the A96 Dualling inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme made and came into force in March 2024. Completion of the statutory process clears the way for land to be acquired to construct the scheme with procedural steps on-going. Construction timetable subject to successful completion of the Statutory Process and consideration of appropriate procurement options. The wider scheme outwith Highland is subject to a review by Scottish Government.
- A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton (also known as East Link) - Construction of new link road between A96 Smithton Roundabout and A9 Inshes Junction, addition of southbound lane on A9 between Raigmore and Inshes Junction and additional lanes on Inshes Overbridge. Road Orders made and came into force in June 2024. Construction timetable subject to successful completion of the Statutory Process and consideration of appropriate procurement options. Successful delivery linked to A96 Dualling and Inshes Corridor Improvements.
- A9/A82 Longman Junction Improvement Scheme - Grade separation of the A9/A82 at Longman Roundabout. Detailed development and assessment of the preferred option for the A9/A82 Longman Junction scheme continues and will culminate in the publication of draft Orders and an Environmental Impact Assessment Report. Delivery of the proposed scheme can only commence if approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for delivery can be determined. THC have submitted formal Change Request for the City-Region Deal with proposed changes relating to the Longman scheme and Corran Ferry. Outcome of Change Request yet to be confirmed.
- A9 North Kessock to Tore - Junction upgrade with A9 Trunk Road and upgrades to internal road network. No enhancement scheme has currently been confirmed.
- Fort William Improvements & Wider Transport Appraisal - Transport interventions to ease peak time congestion within the Fort William urban area. Ongoing Integrated Transport Plan work to assess optimum transport interventions. Corridor safeguards in Plan.

Other local road projects are listed below.

- Inverness - Inshes Corridor - reconfiguration of Inshes Junction and associated changes to surrounding road network. Inshes Corridor Scheme given THC Capital Programme commitment of £9.9M for period 2024-2029 at meeting of June 2024.

Further information and map to follow

Electric Vehicles and Charging Stations

Scotland is taking a leading role in promoting electric and other low-emission vehicles, with a commitment to phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans within specified timescales[3]. However, it is recognised that these types of vehicles will continue to generate congestion and therefore it is important to transition to more space-efficient and sustainable vehicles such as public or shared transport.

Infrastructure needs for most electric vehicle charging can be met at home, where vehicles are parked in driveways for most of the time and where access to private chargers is easier. For people without off street parking, and where there will be need to charge in public places, including tourists to the region, further investment will be required.

Stats on number of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure to follow

Information on future plans to follow

Parking

Provision of appropriate and well-managed parking is crucial to the transport network. In Highland the Council regulates 230 off-street car parks and approximately 10,000 parking bays. There are also numerous privately operated car parks throughout Highland.

In relation to parking NPF4 Policy 13 Sustainable Transport requires LDPs to promote a place based approach to consider how to reduce car-dominance. The LDP Guidance encourages the lowest level of car parking appropriate in each location to be provided, with the aim of reducing reliance on the private car and minimising space dedicated to car parking., recognising what is appropriate will vary from place to place.

This includes Part (e) of the policy supports development proposals that are ambitious in terms of low/no car parking, particularly in urban locations that are well-served by sustainable transport modes and where they do not create barriers to access by disabled people.

The Council's Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Development was published in 2013. Chapter 6 of this document provides information on car parking, including parking standards for different types of development. It recognises that where an area is well served by sustainable moves of travel, reduced parking standards may be appropriate but that in rural areas, where public transport is scarce, less restrictive standards are acceptable.

The parking standards set out are generally expressed as minimum standards for residential developments and maximum standards for other types of developments. It explains that for most new development the Council will usually require parking to provided at or close to the maximum standards.

The Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance explains that in certain circumstances where the Council's parking standards cannot be achieved, reduced level of parking may be acceptable for development located centrally within the Settlement Development Areas set out in the guidance. In these cases the developer may be required to provide developer contributions towards mitigating the transport impacts of the development.

[3] Switched on Scotland Phase 2: An action plan for growth, Scottish Government 2017

NPF4 and IMFLDP2 policies do not place a quantitative limit on car parking provision only that such parking should be minimised, located in a less convenient place than cycle parking, and provide for disabled users. Instead, the management of that parking should promote modal shift to more sustainable modes and therefore minimise harmful emissions. The number, type, location, cost, and enforcement of parking provision and surrounding traffic management measures should all be coordinated to achieve a shift to more sustainable modes where these are (or can be made) an economically viable alternative by the public/private sector. Accordingly, THC's quantitative parking standards as set out in the Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments can still be applied but only as a prompt for the developer and Council to agree a holistic approach to achieve modal shift.

The emerging LTS will seek to help build a fair, affordable, accessible, sustainable, healthy transport system in line with national and local policies and priorities, and to identify opportunities to better understand the relationships between parking provision, demand, charging and their influences of the rest of the transport network. The outcomes of the LTS will help to inform the Proposed HLDP.

The following will also be considered during the preparation of the Proposed HLDP, the need for any review of existing parking guidance to reflect the new approach outlined above, reducing parking provision in areas where other options are available and any potential to reallocate under used car parks for another use.

2. Other Strategic Transport Pressures

A number of other strategic transport pressures facing Highland are outlined below.

Tourism and Leisure

The tourism industry is one of Highland's largest and most significant economic sectors and it helps to support communities across the region. Despite this, there are a range of ongoing challenges facing the sector. In certain areas, visitor numbers have exceeded local capacity resulting in adverse impacts on communities and the local environment. Particular hot spot areas that have seen visitor number significantly increase in recent years, which has put immense pressure on the transport network.

Further information and map to follow

Freight Transport

The vast size of Highland and its wealth of natural resources means it is essential for various types of natural and manmade materials to be transported throughout the area and beyond. In particular, the movement of timber and minerals put pressures on the network, alongside the transportation of large components of renewable energy schemes, including wind turbines and associated infrastructure.

Continuing Strategic Timber Transport funding assists in removing timber from fragile rural roads or enables their strengthening and improvement. This reduces future risk associated with damage to the road, helps to protect the rural road network whilst maintaining accessibility and improves road safety for rural communities. Such works can support walking and cycling as well as vehicle use, for example by including good links to the existing paths network.

Further information and map to follow

Highland is rich in a wide range of mineral resources which are important to our economy, providing materials for construction, energy supplies and other uses which all support employment. The vast majority of minerals are transported by road, with the exception of Glensanda coastal super-quarry where all products are exported by sea.

Further information and map to follow

Appendix 2 – Links to Evidence

Highland Council (2011) Local Transport Strategy 2010/11 – 2013/14

Highland Council (2013) Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Development

Highland Council (2016) West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan Transport Background Paper

Highland Council (2020) Highland Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy to 2050

Highland Council (2021) Electric Vehicle Infrastructure – Strategic Control Plan

Highland Council (2022) Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 Transport Appraisal

Highland Council (2022) Parking Policy and Guidance 2018 to 2023

Highland Council (2023) Local Transport Strategy – Case for Change

Highland Council (2024) Active Travel Strategy 2024-2030

Highland Council (2024) Active Travel Workflow Programme for 2024 – 2025

Highland Council (2024) Highland Delivery Programme

Highland Council (various dates) Active Travel Masterplans

Highland Council (various dates) Highland Council Core Path Plans

Highland Council and Sustrans (2024) Inverness Walking and Cycling Index 2023

Highland Council (2016) West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan Transport Background Paper

Highland Council (2014) CaSPlan Monitoring Statement

Highland Council (2022) Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 Transport Appraisal

Highland Council Fort William Strategic Transport Study

HiTRANS and Highland Council (2020) Modal Shift Strategy

HiTrans (2018) Regional Transport Strategy Update

HiTrans (2024) Draft Regional Transport Strategy

Office for Rail and Road (various dates) Passenger Rail Usage

Scottish Government (2020) Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032

Scottish Government (2022) Route Map to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030

Scottish Government (2022) Scottish Household Survey

Scottish Government (2023) National Planning Framework 4

Scottish Government (2023) Programme for Government 2023 to 2024

Transport Scotland (2020) National Transport Strategy 2

Transport Scotland (2020) Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan, pathway to 2035

Transport Scotland (2020) Strategic Transport Projects Review 2

Transport Scotland (2021) A9 Tore to North Kessock Study

Transport Scotland (2021) Scotland’s Road Safety Framework to 2030

Transport and Connectivity

Transport Scotland (2023) Scottish Transport Statistics

Further information and map to follow

4 Climate Change and Energy

4 Climate Change and Energy

Key headlines

This section confirms how existing strategies and documents such as the Highland Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy, and the Highland Net Zero Strategy, will be key considerations in shaping the strategy and policies of the new HLDP. It also sets out the role of the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy and the Social Value Charter in addressing wider climate change and decarbonisation priorities for the future.

A full copy of this section will be provided on the day of Committee with a summary to form part of the introduction to the item.

Key headlines

Recognising the varied and unique natural environment in Highland, this section looks to identify evidence for fulfilling national policy requirements for biodiversity and natural environment, for which the HLDP approach is likely to be informed by relevant policies in the adopted IMFLDP2. It also highlights the importance of baseline mapping for biodiversity assets in Highland, as well as mapping that will inform the identification of existing and potential nature networks, and to confirm natural heritage designations. A review of the Highland Forest & Woodland Strategy, and additional evidence for soil resources (and their importance) are hoped to be available to inform the Proposed HLDP. New metrics for biodiversity net gain are anticipated to be made available at the national level to inform our new policies and requirements that comply with NPF4. It is likely that a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will be required in the build up to the Proposed HLDP being prepared.

A full copy of this section will be provided on the day of Committee with a summary to form part of the introduction to this item.

Key headlines

This section seeks to ensure that Highland's rich and varied coastline is carefully considered in the new HLDP and particularly the implications for climate change. It includes an overview of national policy requirements, how evidence and analysis of our coastline will be gathered and used, and a more detailed description of the three existing Marine Regional Areas that provide an equivalent approach to the Area Profiles below.

Our Coastline

1. Strategic Overview

The future of aquaculture and coastal development in the Highland region hinges on a balance between sustainable growth, climate resilience, and community empowerment. By focusing on environmentally friendly practices in aquaculture, developing resilient infrastructure and embracing community led approaches to coastal management we can protect our stunning coasts while ensuring long term economic prosperity for its residents.
This paper looks at the requirements for our coastline that the new HLDP will have to consider and the potential sources of evidence to address these.

2. National context - What will the HLDP have to address for our Coastline?

Coastal development refers to the human activities and infrastructure development that take place in coastal areas. That can include coastlines, beaches, estuaries and adjacent land. Coastal development encompasses a wide range of activities and involves consideration for environmental impact, conservation of coastal ecosystems, and management of coastal resources to sustainably balance development with environmental protection.

National Planning Framework 4

NPF4 sets out a long-term vision for Scotland's development. It emphasizes the importance of sustainable growth for our Coast and Aquaculture industry to protect coastal communities and their assets and support resilience to the impacts of climate change. Coastal development aims to stimulate rural economic activity which, in turn, will encourage development of affordable, quality rural homes whilst protecting and reversing biodiversity loss and strengthening nature networks.

Policy 1 & 2 – Tackling the climate and nature crisis apply to all development proposals. It intends to encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis. It requires the LDPs to:

- Address the global climate emergency and nature crisis
- Reduce, minimise or avoid greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote nature recovery and restoration
- Guiding development to sustainable locations

Policy 3 – Introduces policy requirements for biodiversity enhancement. It intends to protect biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks. It requires the LDPs to:

- Protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity
- Promote nature recovery and restoration
- Facilitate the creation of nature networks and strengthen connections between them
- Restore degraded habitats and create new habitats
- Increase biodiversity including populations of priority species

Policy 10 – Develop coastal areas sustainably and adapt to climate change to protect coastal communities and assets and support resilience to the impacts of climate change. It requires the LDPs to:

- Adapt coastlines to the impacts of climate change
- Recognise the affect of rising sea levels and more extreme weather events when considering development of coastal areas
- Take a precautionary approach to flood risk

- Identify opportunities for nature-based solutions to improve the resilience of coastal communities

Policy 32 – Encourage, promote and facilitate aquaculture development and minimise adverse effects on the environment, including cumulative impacts. It requires the LDPs to:

- Guide new aquaculture development in line with national and reginal marine plans
- Minimise adverse environmental impacts, including cumulative impacts that arise from existing and planned developments.

NPF4 has a number of other policies that become relevant to many of the development proposals along our coastline that also set the context for the strategy and policies that need to be covered in the new HLDP:

  - Policy 4 – Natural Places aims to protect, restore and enhance natural assets. LDPs will identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets on land and along coasts. The spatial strategy should safeguard them and consider the objectives and level of their protected status in allocating land and coast for development. Spatial strategies should also better connect nature rich areas by establishing and growing nature networks to help protect and restore biodiversity. (Policy 57 HwLDP and GEN 9 NMP)
  - Policy 7 – Historic assets and places aims to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places. Local development plans should include through their spatial strategy to support the sustainable management of historic environment. (GEN 6 NMP)
  - Policy 10 – Coastal Development aims to protect coastal communities and assets and support resilience to the impacts of climate change. Local plans should consider how to adapt coastlines to the impacts of climate change. Recognising rising sea levels and more extreme weather events. Plans must also take a precautionary approach to flood risk while spatial strategies should reflect the diversity of coastal areas and opportunities to use nature-based solutions to improve the resilience of coastal communities and assets. Plans should also identify developed and undeveloped coast and align their strategy with national marine plan.
  - Policy 11 – Energy – Aims to encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy. LDPs should realise their areas full potential for electricity, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy development. (Policy 67 HwLDP)
  - Policy 17 – Rural Homes - encourages, promotes and facilitates the delivery of more high quality, affordable and sustainable rural home. LDP should set out a tailored approach to this given the uniqueness of the highland region and the rural communities within.
  - Policy 29 – Rural Development – Aims to encourage rural economic activity, innovation and diversification whilst ensuring the distinctive character of the rural area is safeguarded. Local plans should identify the characteristics of individual rural areas and tailor development which not only reflects those characteristics but preserves them. (Policy 35 & 36 HwLDP)

In shaping our own policies and strategy the HwLDP has a wide range of policies and sources that will need to be considered. These policies and their relationship with the policies contained within the NMP and NPF4 are detailed below. These will be subject to a more thorough review in the final Evidence Report to inform the scope of our future coastal planning policies.

National Marine Plan 2015
The current National Marine Plan sets out the wider context for marine planning within Scotland including what should be considered when creating regional marine plans and sectorial marine plans. It outlines several key policies requirements aimed at promoting sustainable development of Scotland's marine environment.

General policies include adopting an ecosystem approach to ensure human activities do not compromise marine health. Biodiversity conservation to protect and enhance marine biodiversity, including habitats and species to maintain ecosystem functionality. Climate change adaptation and mitigation that incorporate strategies to address the impacts on marine environments. Integrated coastal zone management that encourages coherence between marine and terrestrial planning to support sustainable coastal development. Support the development of marine renewables and energy ensuring minimal environmental impact. Promote sustainable fisheries practices that protect fish stocks and fragile marine ecosystems. Support an aquaculture industry that is sustainable, diverse, economically viable and one that contributes to food security whilst minimising environmental impact.

The process of developing a new National Marine Plan (NMP2) has begun and it aims to address the global climate and nature crisis, by carefully managing increased competition for space and resources. The new NMP2 is expected to be adopted by late 2025.

Relevant policies are as follows:

- GEN 5 - Climate Change (Policy 1 NPF4)
- AQUA 3 - Nutrient enhancement and benthic impacts (Policy 3 NPF4, Policy 58, 59 & 60 HwLDP)
- AQUA 7 - Wild Fish (Policy 3 NPF4, Policy 58, 59 & 60 HwLDP)
- AQUA 8 - Protection of Seals (Policy 3 NPF4, Policy 58, 59 & 60 HwLDP)
- GEN 9 – Natural Heritage (Policy 4 NPF4 and Policy 57 HwLDP)
- GEN 6 – Historic Environment (Policy 7 NPF4)
- GEN 2 - Economic Benefit
- GEN 3 - Social Benefit
- GEN 4 - Co-Existence
- GEN 7 - Land/Seascape
- AQUA 1 - Appropriate Locations (Policy 32 NPF4 and Policy 50 HwLDP)
- AQUA 2 -Restricted Development
- AQUA 4 – Appropriate Location – Shellfish
- AQUA 5 – Protect Land/seascape
- AQUA 6 – Containment of Disease Management Areas

3. Key Implications for the HLDP

In response to the policy requirements above the emerging evidence will need to assess how appropriate the current approach and policy landscape is. An overview of the other policies that will need to be considered is set out at Appendix 1.

Our Coastline

In addition, the evidence for our coastline needs to consider the following three issues for managing Highland's coastline in the new HLDP. These are:

a) **How the coastline supports the Highland economy now and, in the future?**
b) **The understanding of environmental designations on our coastline**
c) **The implications of climate change for managing our coastline**
d) **What evidence can drive a place-specific approach in our coastal sub-regions**

A. How our Coastline supports the Highland economy now and in the future?

The length of the coastline within the Highland Council region at low water is 4,905km which is 21% of the Scottish Total. Almost half of the Scottish population lives 8km from the coast. The Highland region sees 87.9% of the population living within 8km of the coast. This coastline has offered employment across the Highland region since settlement began.

The fishing economy began when the Vikings arrived in the 8th Century and is still a significant part of our economy to this date. The value of landings for the Highland region in 2019 was £56 million and the industry directly employs 881 people.

In 1965 Scottish ingenuity saw the first marine fish farm being established in Loch Ailort in Inverness-shire. There are 150 active fin fish sites in the Scottish Highlands, with the industry directly employing approximately 3,290 people with approximately 1,050 of those being employed within the Highland region. The Scottish salmon farming industry alone was valued at £620 million with an economic value in the highlands estimated to be £198.4 million.

The historical significance and diverse applications of seaweed have made it an enduring part of Scotland's coastal economy. The recent resurgence of the seaweed industry has been driven by interest in sustainable and environmentally friendly products which include food, health supplements, biofuels and biodegradable packaging. In 2023 it was estimated that the seaweed farming sector was worth £10 million a year. The proportion of seaweed activities in the Highland region is potentially 50% of the industry. However, challenges in the drying process of seaweed have proven to be restricting further growth and development of this industry.

The ever-growing renewable energy sector has brought several benefits to the Scottish Highlands. Projects such as winds farms and hydroelectric plants have stimulated the economic activity in rural areas. Renewable energy contributes to reducing greenhouse gases and climate change which is particularly important for our sensitive eco systems, preserving the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Highlands.

The announcement of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport (which includes the ports of Cromarty Firth, Nigg, Inverness and Ardersier plus Highland Deephaven) brings significant economic and social benefits to local communities in the Highland region. These ports are set to become hubs for renewable energy and green technology, fostering new industries around offshore wind, hydrogen production, and sustainable logistics. This will create thousands of high-quality jobs, boosting local employment and providing training opportunities for residents, particularly in engineering, manufacturing, and marine services. By attracting international investment, these freeports will stimulate regional economic growth while adhering to strict environmental standards, ensuring sustainable development. Furthermore, they will support local supply chains, enabling small and medium-sized enterprises to thrive, and improve infrastructure in the region, fostering long-term prosperity for Highland communities.

Most of these industries have been at the heart of our rural communities for generations. They are our heritage and in some cases our identities.

Highland Employment Stats

West Coast	
Industry	**% Employed**
Agriculture	
Aquaculture	
education	
Fishing	
Health	
Marine Transport/Ferries	
Public Administration	
Tourism	

East Coast	
Industry	**% Employed**
Agriculture	
Education	
Fishing	
Health	
Public Administration	
Renewables	
Tourism	

North Coast	
Industry	**% Employed**
Agriculture	
Education	
Fishing	
Health	
Marine Transport/Ferries	
Public Administration	
Renewables	

Tourism	

Our coastline has and continues to provide food, employment and economic stability to wider Scotland, and we should be proud of each and every industry that allows us to prosper. There will be an ongoing need to support these industries as a vital part of the economy whilst also challenging rural depopulation, the climate crises and restoring biodiversity so that future generations can continue to benefit from our very privileged heritage.

Our region also benefits from a large network of marine infrastructure, from small-scale boat accesses such as slipways, to major strategic ports. Inverness and Cromarty Ports support the movement of goods, products and people in and out of the region. Cromarty is in the top eleven ports in Scotland serving these functions and enabling significant cruise ship passenger numbers to visit the Highlands.

The Highland Council is responsible for a significant number of these facilities, whilst a range of private and trust organisations operate larger-scale facilities such as Glensanda (marine-access only super quarry freight);

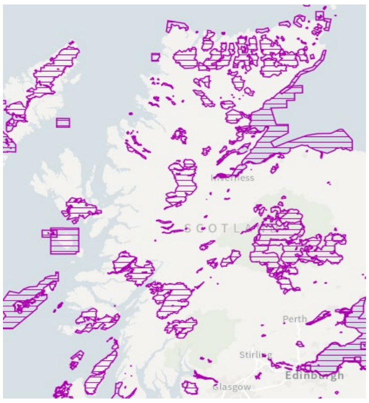
- Inverness Harbour
- Nigg Ferry Terminal
- Cromarty Ferry Terminal
- Ullapool (Calmac)
- Uig (Calmac)
- Sconser (Calmac)
- Clachan (Calmac)
- Lochaline (Calmac)
- Armadale (Calmac)
- Mallaig (Calmac)
- Canna
- Rum
- Eigg
- Muck
- Gills Bay (Pentland Ferries)
- Scrabster
- Wick

In managing these coastal assets and fulfilling the requirements a clear strategy will be needed that will contribute to creating a comprehensive and forward thinking local development plan that effectively manages coastal assets and supports sustainable development within the area.

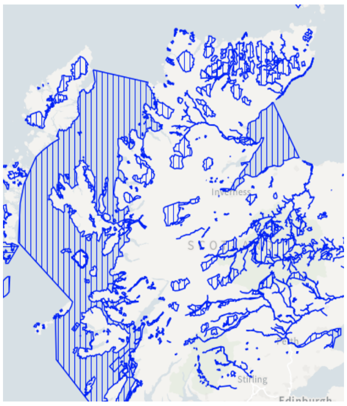
B. The understanding of environmental designations on our coastline

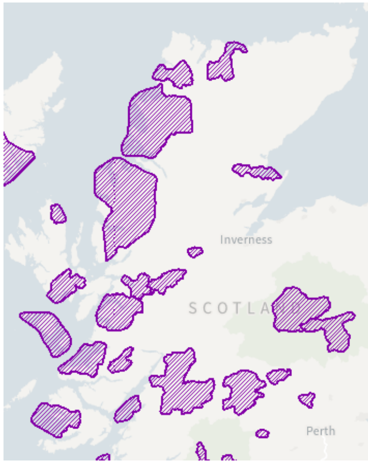
Scotland's Highland region is a unique and diverse landscape, home to a rich tapestry of natural and cultural heritage. To safeguard these precious environments, various protected area designations have been established.

Our Coastline



National Scenic Areas (NSAs) are exceptional landscapes recognized for their outstanding natural beauty and ecological significance. They have been established to protect and enhance these areas, NSA's aim to promote sustainable management, conserve wildlife habitats, and support local communities through responsible tourism. They encompass a range of breathtaking environments from mountains and glens to serene lochs and coastlines, offering vital spaces for recreation, education, and inspiration. Safeguarding these landscapes for future generations by fostering a balance between conservation and development.



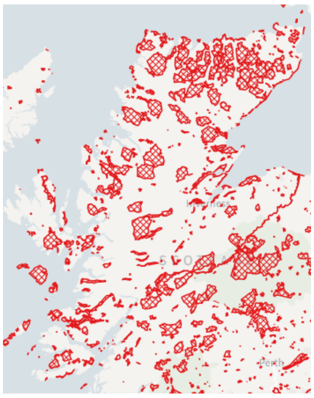


Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are vital sites recognised for their significant natural habitats and species. The primary purpose is to protect and preserve biodiversity by ensuring that these areas maintain their ecological integrity and health. SAC's provide essential habitats for a range of flora and fauna, including many rare and endangered species. They aim to prevent habitat loss and promote sustainable land management practices and enhance conservation efforts.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), are zones established to conserve marine ecosystems, habitats, and species within the surrounding waters. These areas aim to protect biodiversity, promote sustainable fisheries, and safeguard critical marine environments from the impacts of human activity, such as pollution and overfishing.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs), are critical for the protection and safeguarding our bird populations and their habitats. These areas aim to protect species that are vulnerable, rare or migratory, ensuring their survival and the health of their ecosystems. The establishment of SPA's not only contributes to the conservation of biodiversity but also supports local communities by fostering eco-tourism and enhancing the natural environment.

Our Coastline



Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) encompass a variety of ecosystems, including wetlands, woodlands, grasslands, and coastal regions, each of which supports unique biodiversity and geological sites. These protected areas provide opportunities for research, education, and public enjoyment fostering a deeper appreciation of the Highlands diverse landscapes and wildlife.

The various designations all play crucial roles in preserving the region's biodiversity and character. Careful consideration with other Key Agencies will help inform our strategy and the tailored polices required to address specific issues across Highland. While development and planning opportunities are essential for growth, it is essential to balance these with the need to protect these valuable areas. Careful consideration of environmental impacts, sustainable practices, and community involvement is vital to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the beauty and benefits of the Scottish Highlands**.**

C. Understanding the implications of Climate Change

Dynamic Coast
The Dynamic Coast project has carried out detailed analysis over the last few years that provides us with essential up to date evidence of how each distinctive part of our coastline is being affected by the coastal change. The Dynamic Coast project aims to provide the strategic evidence base on the extent of coastal erosion in Scotland by:

1. Improving the evidence on coastal change
2. Improving the awareness of coastal change
3. Supporting decision-makers to ensure Scotland's coast and assets can adapt to our future climate.

This is considered to be a key tool for understanding our coastline in more detail and addressing the priorities for unique parts of our coastline in the HLDP.
[Further detail to follow]

- Dynamic Coast Adaption Plan - https://www.dynamiccoast.com/files/ccapg_2023feb.pdf
- Dynamic Coast Research Summery and National Overview - Dynamic Coast

Coastal Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) – Activity –
Within the Highland Council area, the coastal zone is home to much of the population, and contains significant infrastructure such as roads, railway lines, bridges, harbours etc. These coastal areas help to drive the economy within the Council area and as such a more adaptive approach is required to ensure our communities and infrastructure remain resilient in the future. The CCAP will provide an overview of the risks across The Highland Council coastal area, identifying locations and infrastructure that are least resilient to climate change and rising sea levels, providing a framework and flexible approach to address these risks over time.

Milestones
10/24 – Finalisation of Regional level Coastal Change Adaptation Plan
04/25 – Case Study Report

D. What evidence can drive a place-specific approach in our coastal sub-regions

In assessing the current policy landscape in Highland there is an absence of up-to-date policies and strategy for our unique coastline. Our historic approach has been based on splitting the Highland region into three areas, North, East and West. The overview of our coastal sub-regions in Section ___ has followed these three areas. However, given the threat of coastal erosion and the unique implications this might for individual section of these sub-regions, there may be a need to analyse the issues they experience, and are likely to face, in more detail.

In moving towards an evidence report and ultimately a draft spatial strategy and policies for our coastline, the more detailed analysis above is proposed to be complemented by an overview of the three sub-areas set out in appendix __ which is summarised below. This takes account of the Highland Regional Spatial Strategy (published 2020) which serves as a guiding framework for sustainable development of our coastline across the Highlands. Recognising the area's unique landscapes, cultural heritage and diverse communities, the strategy aims to balance environmental stewardship with economic growth.

North Coast – Focus on sustainable growth, environmental protection and resilience to climate change. The north coast is a region of rugged beauty, with significant ecological, economic and cultural value, making coastal development a critical area of focus. The priorities for coastal development reflect the need to balance economic opportunities, such as tourism and renewable energy, with environmental stewardship and community resilience. Coastal development should include provisions for affordable housing, ensuring communities are not priced out of the market due to tourism or industrial development and by building resilient and well-connected infrastructure, including public transport, healthcare and schools that will improve the quality of life for coastal communities and encourage re-population.

West Coast – Balancing economic growth, environmental conservation, and community resilience. The region is known for its diverse landscapes, remote communities, and important marine environments. Shaped by national priorities for coastal defence mechanisms, resilience of coastal infrastructure and sustainable development. Aquaculture being a key industry, the strategy highlights the need for sustainable practices that minimise the impact on marine ecosystems. Priorities for coastal development in this region reflect the need for sustainable growth whilst ensuring environmental protection, climate adaptation and community wellbeing. By reviewing current aquaculture locations and guiding new developments will offer sustainable growth and support ecological resilience.

East Coast – Leveraging the region's economic opportunities while addressing environmental sustainability and preservation of coastal communities. The strategy reflects its unique blend of urban growth, rural communities, and critical marine ecosystems. It prioritises the need to respond to climate challenges while capitalising on opportunities for growth in sectors like tourism, renewable energy and marine industries.

4. Consultation Questions

Question 1. Do the sources outlined suitably capture the economic development priorities for our coastline?
Question 2. Have we identified all the appropriate environmental designations? If not, which additional ones should we consider?
Question 3. Do the sources of evidence outlined suitably identify the biodiversity, climate change and requirements for managing and safeguarding our coastline?
Question 4. Is the place-based evidence for our coastal sub-regions efficient?

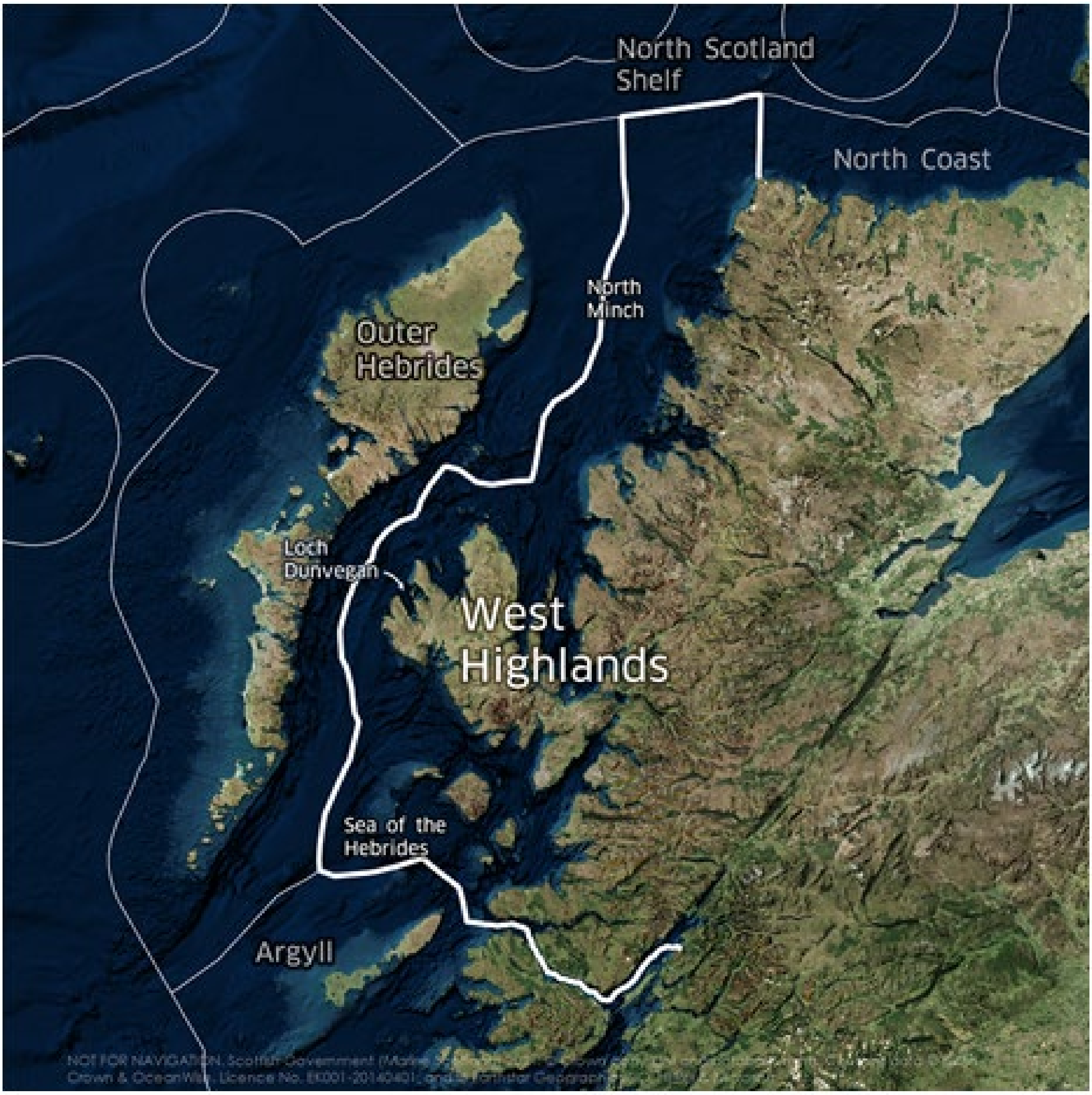
5. Appendix 1: Other Policies Consideration

- HwLDP
  - Policy 72 Pollution (Policy 2 of NPF4)
  - Policy 72 Air Quality (Policy 2 of NPF4)
  - Policy 74 Green Networks (Policy 2 of NPF4)
  - Policy 58 Protected species (Policy 3 NPF4)
  - Policy 59 Other important species (Policy 3 NPF4)
  - Policy 60 Other important habitats (Policy 3 NPF4 & Aqua 3, Aqua 7 and Aqua 8 NMP)
  - Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage (Policy 4 NPF4 and GEN9 NMP)
  - Policy 49 Coastal Development (Policy 10 NPF4)
  - Policy 67 Renewable Energy Developments (Policy 11 NPF4)
  - Policy 70 Waste management (Policy 12 NPF4)
  - Policy 35 Housing in the Countryside (Policy 29 NPF4)
  - Policy 36 Development in the wider Countryside (Policy 29 NPF4)
  - Policy 50 Aquaculture (Policy 32 NPF4)
  - Policy 30 Physical Constraints
  - Policy 28 Sustainable Design
  - Policy 61 Landscape (possibly linked to rural development)
  - Policy 63 Water Environment
- Highland Coastal Development Strategy - https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1062/highland_coastal_development_strategy
- Flood Risk Management Plan - https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/81/flooding/3
- Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture - https://www.gov.scot/publications/vision-sustainable-aquaculture/documents/
- NatureScot guidance on Aquaculture Planning - https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/planning-and-development-advice/marine-aquaculture
- https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/146814/working-arrangements-for-aquaculture.pdf
- Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Guidance (dynamiccoast.com)
- Scottish Coastal Observatory Data Scottish Coastal Observatory Data | marine.gov.scot
- SEPA Coastal Flood Maps - Flood maps | Beta | SEPA | Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy - Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency - draft - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
- Scotland's Climate Change Plan - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions - Climate change - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

- MS Planning & Locational Guidelines - Planning & Locational Guidelines | marine.gov.scot
- SEPA – Sector Plan - Finfish aquaculture sector plan | Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Marine Scotland Maps - Marine Scotland Maps - WMS and WFS | marine.gov.scot
- Understanding Scottish Places (usp.scot)
- Fisheries Management Scotland - https://fms.scot/fish-farming/

WEST HIGHLAND COASTAL AREA PROFILE

1 West Highland Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The West Highland region from Fort William to Cape Wrath, encompassing the Small Isles and the Isle of Skye, is a breathtaking landscape that epitomizes the rugged beauty of Scotland. Dominated by dramatic mountains, including the towering Ben Nevis, the area is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, offering numerous trails, lochs, and glens to explore. The coastline is punctuated by picturesque islands like Eigg, Muck, and Rum, each boasting its own unique charm and vibrant ecosystems. Skye, with its iconic landscapes such as the Quiraing and the

Old Man of Storr, enchants visitors with its mystical beauty and rich folklore. The region is also steeped in history, with ancient castles and remnants of clan culture dotting the landscape. With its dramatic scenery, rich biodiversity, and a deep sense of tradition, this part of the Highlands offers a captivating blend of adventure and tranquillity, inviting travellers to immerse themselves in its wild and enchanting environment.

3 How well does the Area function?

The west functions relatively well considering its geographical and demographic challenges. Currently the west coast is the only permitted area for Aquaculture development and as such, there is a stronger contribution to the Economic performance of the area.

It also benefits from a thriving tourist industry. There are concerns about the sustainability of the tourist industry particularly on local infrastructure.

Transport infrastructure can be challenging, roads and ferry services exist but are limited. Again, rail connections exist but are limited.

The region, as most are in highland, vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as a rising sea levels and changing weather pattens.

4 Overview and other key facts and figures.

- Coastline length (km) 3,656
- Sea area (km2) 10,420
- Deepest point (m) 322
- Average depth (m) 18.2
- Tides (m) 3.4m-5.1m
- Salinity 34.27-34.59
- Sea surface Temperature (°c) 8.1-13.8
-

West Highland has a complex coastline with sea lochs, bays, islands. Many of the sea lochs have sills that restrict water exchange. It receives large freshwater inflow from land runoff and numerous small rivers, which influences the salinity in its coastal waters.

5 Place Plans and Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Local Place Plan;

- Gairloch
- Torridon & Kinlochewe
- Broadford & Strath
- Sleat
- Morvern

- Duror & Kentallen
- Ardgour
- Kinlochleven

Local Place Plans • Planaichean Àite Ionadail (arcgis.com)

Skye, Lochalsh & Wester Ross Community Partnership - SLWRCP is currently reviewing the role and remit of the partnership however several local plans have been created. Aspirations of those plan's include a net zero emission place where actions have been taken to decarbonise all key sectors and a diverse and green economy that builds on the area's natural assets. A resilient and resourceful community network where everyone has access to excellent quality, affordable housing, and appropriate access to essential services. A community whereby Gaelic and the area's unique culture are identity is celebrated. Reliable and affordable future proofed digital connections. Moder healthcare and education facilities. An integrated and well-maintained transport infrastructure.

Sutherland Community Partnership - The key themes that Sutherland community partnership is working towards are transport, employability, fuel poverty and food strategy, affordable homes, and infrastructure.

Lochaber Community Partnership - Lochaber Community Partnership are currently reviewing the role and remit of the partnership to identify current priorities. Work to date identified the desire for people in the area will lead lives free from the experience of poverty and benefit from good mental health and wellbeing. Communities will be more involved in the decisions that affect their lives and help shape areas to make them stronger, safer, and more resilient communities.

6 Development Opportunities

Coastal housing and development – Consideration needs to be given to development with mitigation against environmental and flooding impacts. There is a risk of the West coast losing its character of traditional croft style properties to those with unsympathetic design and not in keeping with the cultural heritage of the area. However, effective coastal planning can support local communities with sustainable development, safeguarding these areas for generations to come.

Tourism is a key part of the local economy based on the high scenic quality of the West Coast. Sheltered west coast waters could be further developed for wildlife and water sports potential. Successful development would aim to offset the decline in some traditional industries and support rural economies.

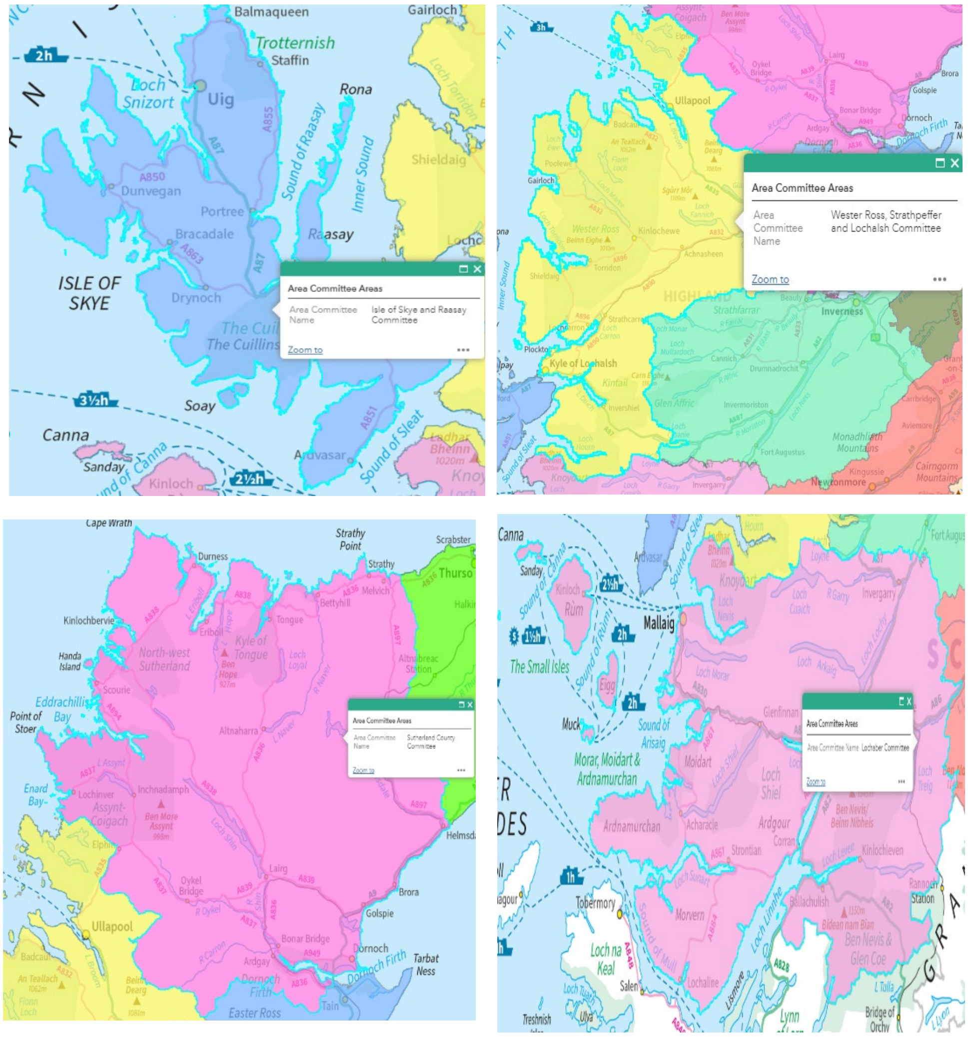
Aquaculture – Mapping of all current farms on the west coast would identify sites that could have the potential to be consolidated and identify other sites that have potential to be relocated offshore. This would offer the opportunity for the shellfish farming industry to expand into the vacated sites.

Coastal Profiles

Inshore Fishing – Sustainable development of our shellfish and Nephrops fisheries will bring valuable employment to remote west coast communities. Working with and supporting the establishment of inshore fisheries in a sustainable way to ensure avoidance of depleting fish stocks. Development of shellfish farming, which is relatively underdeveloped in some areas would offer employment opportunity and protect dwindling wild stocks.

Harbours – several small harbours have the potential to be upgraded which would attract a wider mix of pleasure crafts, encourage tourism and support some of our more remote communities.

7 Sub-Sub-Regions



We think that the HLDP will need to analyse and steer the development priorities across 4 sub areas within this part of the Highland coastline (Lochaber, Skye & Raasay, Wester Ross & Lochalsh and West Sutherland to Cape Wrath). The following maps show the possible break down of these sub areas and the current operations and activities within them:

Coastal Profiles

Principal Town(s): Fort William, Portree, Ullapool

Marine Activities;

- Aquaculture
- Salmon and Sea Trout Fishing
- Seaweed Harvesting
- Marine Tourism
- Marine Transport
- Subsea Cables
- Military Activities

NORTH HIGHLAND COASTAL AREA PROFILE

1 North Highland Boundary

2 Character of the Area

The North Highland region, stretching from Cape Wrath to Duncansby Head, is a breathtaking tapestry of dramatic landscapes and rich history. Characterized by rugged cliffs, sweeping beaches, and rolling moors, this area showcases some of Scotland's most stunning natural beauty. The coastline is dotted with charming villages and ancient ruins, reflecting a deep cultural heritage shaped by both Gaelic and Norse influences. The relentless Atlantic waves crash against the shoreline, creating a wild and untamed atmosphere, while the iconic lighthouse at Duncansby Head stands as a sentinel over the turbulent waters. This remote region, with its vast skies and stunning sunsets, invites exploration and contemplation, offering a sense of solitude and connection to the land that is utterly unique.

3 How well does this area function?

The area relies heavily on traditional industries like fishing, agriculture, and crofting. It has been boosted by tourism with the NC500 however the increased tourism brought to the area offers only seasonal employment. As such, there is an older demographic and the younger generation typically leave for urban areas, where year-round employment can be sought. The region has potential for further development and investment from the renewable energy sector bringing local employment and investment.

Conservation efforts are strong with several protected areas and initiative aimed at preserving the unique flora and fauna of the region.

The region, as most are in Highland, vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as a rising sea levels and changing weather pattens. Challenges remain in infrastructure, population retention and environmental sustainability.

It was identified in the HIE's (2014) review of fragile areas that Lairg, Lybster, Tongue, Bettyhill, Altnaharra, Melvich and Durness all fall within this category. Fragile areas are characterised by declining population, under representation of young people, lack of economic opportunities, below average income levels and problems with transportation.

In the early 1800's when the herring stocks were depleted from the west coast, fishing operations moved to the north coast. Today we still see commercial fishing harvesting haddock, cod, and shellfish. Just off the coast of Thurso, Pentland firth will become the world's largest floating offshore wind farm with Scrabster Harbour being chosen as the operations and maintenance base.

4 Overview and other key facts and figures.

- Coast Line Length (km) 544
- Sea Area (km2) 5,443
- Deepest Point (m) 124
- Average Depth (m) 68
- Tides (m) 2.1-4.3
- Salinity 34.49-34.85
- Sea surface Temperature (°C) 7.8-13.7

The North coast have some of the strongest currents in the world. The region only has a small amount of freshwater input, and the north coast is exposed to wind and waves from the north and east. The north coast has a major ferry route running from Scrabster and Gills Bay to Orkney.

5 Place Plans and Outcomes

Local Place Plan

- Dunnet & Canisbay
- Thurso
- Bettyhill, Altnaharra & Strathnaver

Local Place Plans • Planaichean Àite Ionadail (arcgis.com)

What do the Community Partnerships say?

Caithness Community Partnership (WIP) - Want to prioritise local transportation and develop social transport options. Town centre development to improve buildings and spaces and identify social enterprise to provide additional amenities.

Sutherland Community Partnership (WIP) - Want to improve access to affordable, reliable, and well-connected public transport to allow communities to get around in ways that are better for the environment. Excellent quality local jobs that will provide decent work opportunities and help create lively places where people want to spend time.

https://highlandcpp.org.uk/

6 Development Opportunities

Coastal Housing and Development – Declining population and lack of affordable housing coupled with the decommissioning of Dounreay are major challenges, and like all coastal communities within Highland, consideration must be given to environmental and flooding impacts.

Renewable Energy – with the growing renewable energy sector has the potential to counteract the population decline and redirect skills from Dounreay to the marine renewable energy sectors. Opportunity to support energy projects will bring much needed economic prosperity to the region.

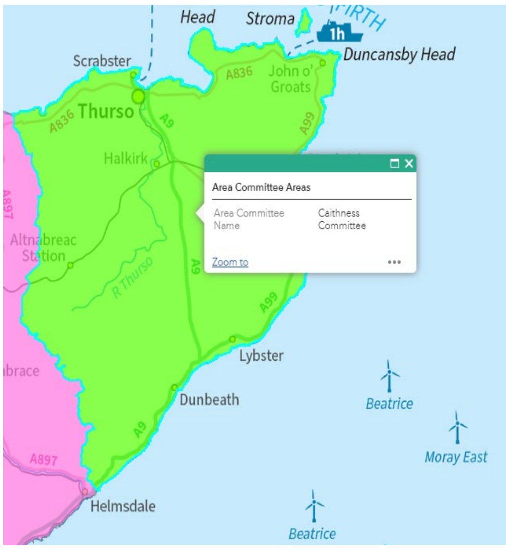
Tourism – A strong tourism industry has been built by the popularity of the North Coast 500. This tends to be seasonal and offers employment during peak tourist season and is one of the top three employment sectors within the area.

Coastal Profiles

The high scenic value of the area means careful control of coastal and offshore development. Protection of the integrity of designated wildlife and heritage sites and high value landscape areas by discouraging inappropriate development will be paramount for the region.

7 Sub-Sub-Regions

We think that the HLDP will need to analyse and steer the development priorities across 2 sub areas within this part of the Highland coastline (North Sutherland from Cape Wrath and Caithness to Duncansby Head). The following maps show the possible break down of these sub areas and the current operations and activities within them:



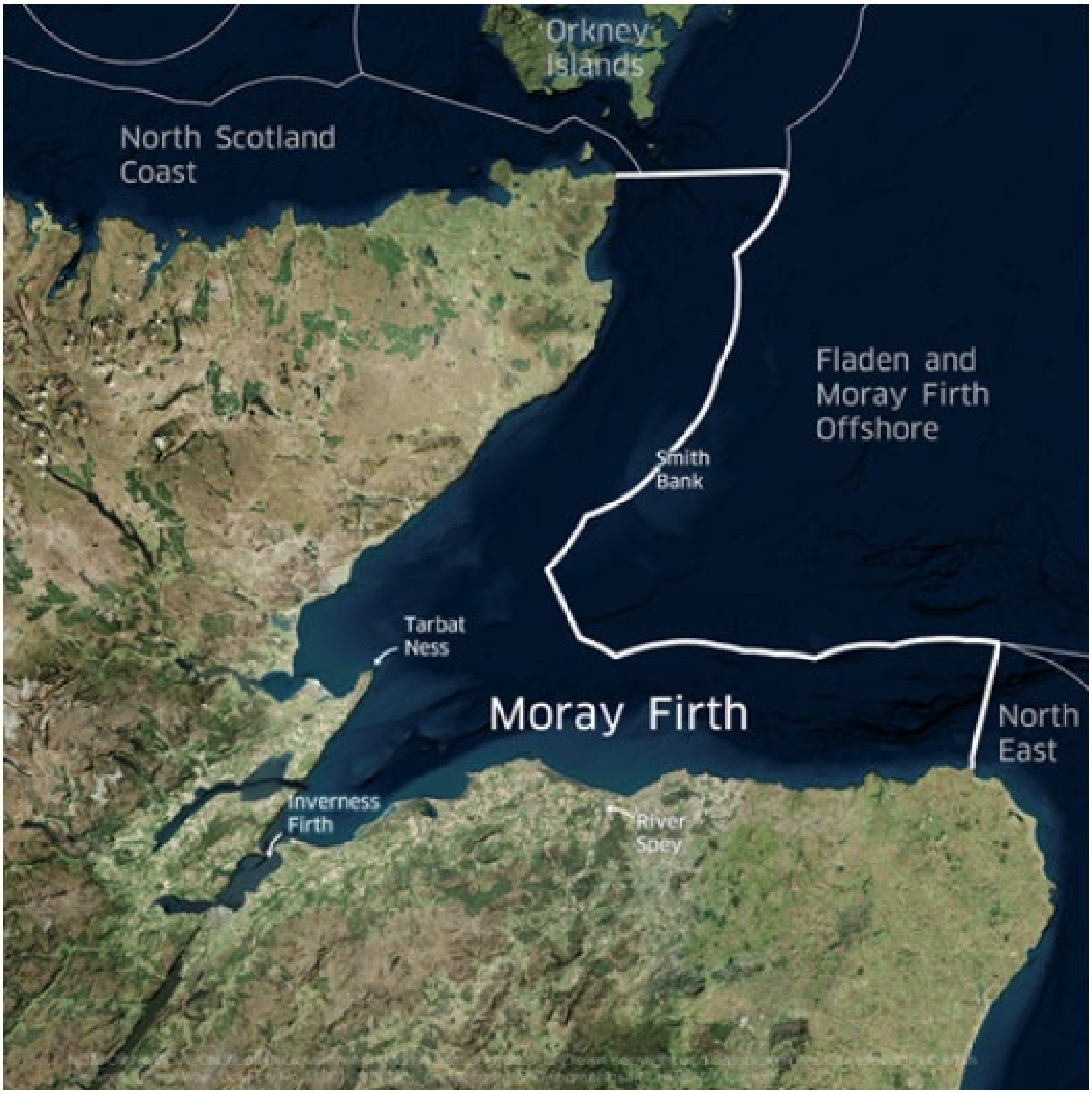
Marine Activities

- Fishing (landing at Scrabster)
- Salmon and Sea Trout fishing
- Seaweed harvesting
- Marine Transport
- Subsea cables
- Renewables

Principal Town(s); Thurso

EAST HIGHLAND COASTAL AREA PROFILE

1 East Highland Boundary (To Nairn)



2 Character of the Area

The East Highland region from Duncansby Head to Nairn is a captivating blend of dramatic coastal scenery and serene landscapes. This stretch features rolling hills, lush farmlands, and charming fishing villages, all framed by the sparkling waters of the Moray Firth. The coastline is marked by sandy beaches, rocky outcrops, and scenic cliffs, inviting exploration, and offering stunning views, particularly at sunrise and sunset. The area is steeped in history, with ancient ruins and standing stones that tell stories of the past, while the vibrant local culture is reflected in the warm hospitality of its communities. Wildlife thrives here, with opportunities for spotting dolphins and seabirds, adding to the region's natural allure. Overall, this part of the Highlands embodies a harmonious blend of rugged beauty and tranquil charm, making it a remarkable destination for visitors seeking both adventure and relaxation.

3 How well does this area function?

The East coats of the Highlands functions effectively in many respects. The area benefits from a relatively robust economy driven by agriculture, energy, and tourism. The new Green free port in Ardersier and Cromarty will bring even more economic and social benefit not only to the area but the wider Highland region. Infrastructure is better developed compared to other parts of the Highlands with good transport links and digital connectivity.

Housing and development continue to be an issue with a lack of housing available. The green free port will add pressure to this housing demand and local development and improvements to local amenities and infrastructure will need to be conducted sustainably with climate change in mind.

The region is also addressing climate change impacts such as coastal erosion and flooding through various mitigation and adaption strategies.

4 Overview and other key facts and figures.

- Coastline Length (km) 522
- Deepest point (m) 256
- Average Depth (m) 80
- Tides (m) 1.6-4.3
- Salinity 32-35
- Sea Surface Temperature (°C) 7.8-16.1

There is a gradual transition from the more estuarine and sheltered condition of the inner firths (Beauly, Dornoch and Cromarty firths) to the open sea of the outer firth. The currents in this region include the general southward coastal flow.

5 Place Plans and Outcomes

Local Place Plan;

- Nairnshire
- Black Isle
- Golspie
- Helmsdale & District

Local Place Plans • Planaichean Àite Ionadail (arcgis.com)

What do Community Partnership say?

Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership - The Narin and Nairnshire community partnership are reviewing the role and remit of the partnership, identifying priorities, and developing one plan worked towards reducing inequalities in the area. Their previous plan set out to encourage people to make a collective difference to improve outcomes for the area. Plans, develops and re-designs services to tackle inequalities. Influences local development to help improve the lives of the most vulnerable and collaborates to develop and support initiatives which improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

Mid Ross Community Partnership - The key themes that the partnership will prioritise is poverty reduction, mental health and wellbeing, and care for the elderly.

Sutherland Community Partnership (WIP) - Want to improve access to affordable, reliable, and well-connected public transport to allow communities to get around in ways that are better for the environment. Excellent quality local jobs that will provide decent work opportunities and help create lively places where people want to spend time.

Caithness Community Partnership (WIP) - Want to prioritise local transportation and develop social transport options. Town centre development to improve buildings and spaces and identify social enterprise to provide additional amenities.

https://highlandcpp.org.uk/

6 Development Opportunities

Coastal Housing and Development – Some of the more remote villages such as Lybster, Brora and Dunbeath could benefit from rejuvenation of coastal brownfield sites. With a declining population well planned hosing and business would help safeguard these rural towns and villages.

The towns and villages on the East coast are varied in their communities and identities and a careful planning approach must be taken to foster growth and sustain communities.

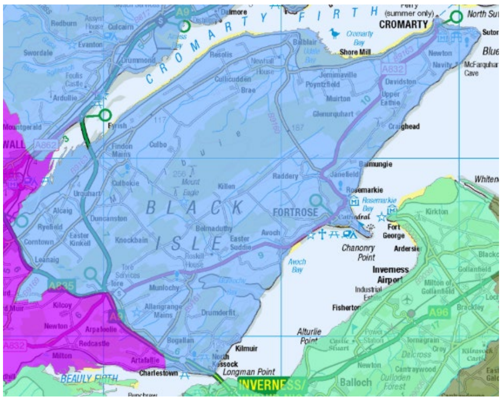
Tourism – One of the main industries with the North Coast 500, The Highland Capital of Inverness championship golf courses, and a wide variety of attractions all along the East Coast.

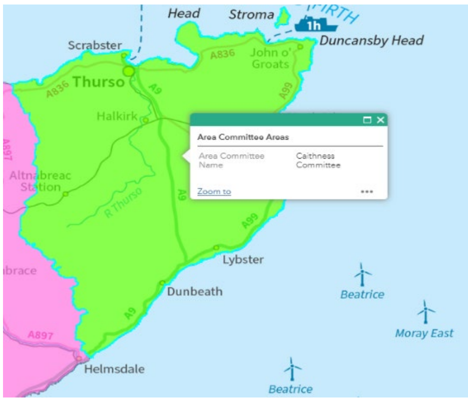
Continuing to build on the economic and infrastructure strengths of this area whilst safeguarding the coastal wildlife resources and developing and enhancing the quality recreational opportunities for its growing population will continue to strengthen this area.

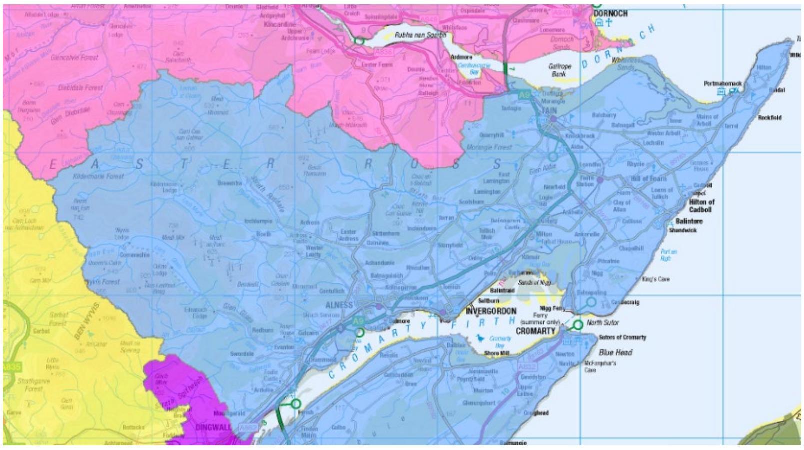
7 Sub-Sub-Regions

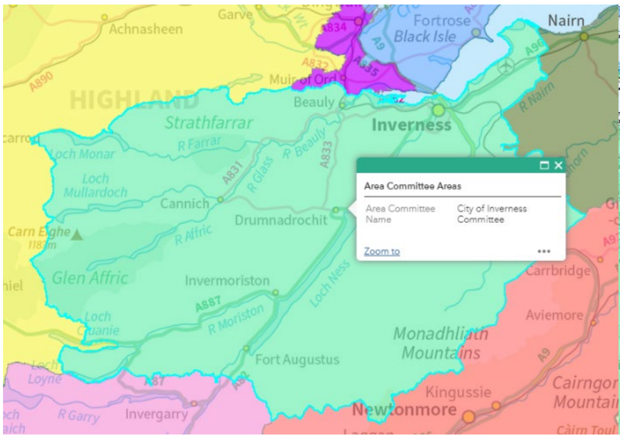
We think that the HLDP will need to analyse and steer the development priorities across 4 sub areas within this part of the Highland coastline (Black Isle, Caithness East, Easter Ross, Nairn/Inverness). The following maps show the possible break down of these sub areas and the current operations and activities within them:

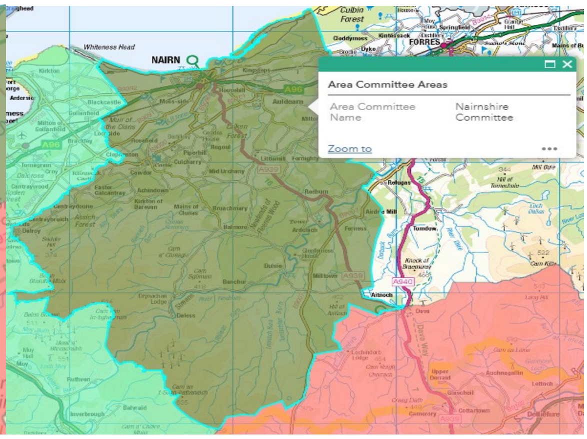
Coastal Profiles











Marine Activities

- Marine tourism
- Fishing
- Offshore wind farms
- Seaweed harvesting
- Salmon and Sea Trout fishing
- Marine Transport
- Military Activity

- Subsea cables
- Green Freeport

Principal Town (s); Wick, Dornoch, Inverness, Nairn

7 Design, Well-being and Placemaking

Key headlines

This Section seeks evidence to ensure our communities are modern, resilient and fit for the future, whilst safeguarding and protecting our existing important built heritage asset. The Section goes on to consider how to encourage, promote and facilitate well designed developments where our residents live in a friendly and welcoming communities, which have quick and easy access to shops, workplaces, community facilities, play and open space, and local services, allowing them to spend less time commuting and more time with family and friends.

The creation of well-connected communities require appropriate access to shops and services, with this section considering retail locations and how the Local Living Concept will operate across both the urban and rural areas of the Highland Region.

Design, Wellbeing and Placemaking

Headline Issue: Design, Wellbeing & Placemaking

The Council ambition is to reinforce our existing communities across the entire Highland region to ensure they are modern, resilient and fit for the future, whilst safeguarding and protecting our existing important built heritage asset. To achieve this, the Council will need to encourage, promote and facilitate well designed developments where our residents live in a friendly and welcoming communities, which have quick and easy access to shops, workplaces, community facilities, play and open space, and local services, allowing them to spend less time commuting and more time with family and friends.

1.0 Placemaking

In recent years, the strategy for development across Highland has focused on ensuring that future developments and communities are well designed and enjoy easy access to shops, workplaces, community facilities and local services and our city and town centres that act as key destinations. National guidance requires the new HLDP to strengthen its approach to design and placemaking to ensure national and local outcomes are achieved through development. This paper brings together some of the evidence that is considered to be required to be considered to address these issues, including the consideration as to how the Highland can meet the 20minute neighbourhood concept.

The local and national Climate and Ecological Emergency (Highland's declared in May 2019), combined with other strategies and policies, require the Council to prioritise the protection of our finite resources, including the Infrastructure First approach outlined in Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4. This acts as a prompt for the Council to be more careful about how the location, principles and qualities of all development contribute to these national policies and outcomes, and that infrastructure and services can be managed and improved efficiently. This is also considered to be a suitable emerging theme to cover the duty to safeguard and improve Highland's high quality historic and built environment.

It is, therefore, the Council's ambition to create sustainable, good quality, well designed and connected communities built at the right density in the right location, all of which combine to achieve good placemaking whilst at the same time protecting our finite natural and biodiversity resources.

A number of policies already exist in the Council's current Local Development Plans which were designed to combat these issues. The most recent review of the IMF2LDP brought these issues into sharper focus but were also felt necessary to consider in the wider Highland context.

A new Placemaking Policy was developed as part of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Review (IMF2 - General Policy 8: Placemaking) which developed a new approach requiring developments of 4 or more dwellings, and major non housing applications, to complete a 'Placemaking Audit'. This Placemaking Audit was developed in-house and aimed to ensure high quality design, appropriate site layouts and developments being built at the right density in the right location, all of which combine to achieve good placemaking whilst at the same time protecting our finite natural and bio-diversity resources.

As the Audit was prepared before the publication of NPF4, by the time the IMF2LDP was considered by the DPEA a number of the requirements and ambitions, including the 6 qualities of placemaking were outdated. Consequently, the Reporter recommended that the Placemaking Audit was removed from the adopted version of the IMF2LDP and instead progress the audit as non-statutory planning policy. The recommendation to remove from the adopted IMF2LDP was accepted and work is ongoing to consider bring forward the audit as non-statutory guidance.

Nevertheless, the Council ambitions around placemaking remain and whilst we remain committed to taking it forward in the short-term as non-statutory guidance, the Council is committed to bring it into the development plan and proposes to review, revise and further develop the Placemaking Audit as part of the HLDP. As such, following refinement, further engagement with the development industry will be undertaken.

2.0 Local Living:

NPF4 Policy 15 requires Local Development Plans to support 'Local Living' within settlements, with the Council defining the 'Local Living' concept as a method to reinforce and create communities that are attractive, safe, walkable places where people of all ages and abilities can access services, greenspace, learning and leisure within a walk of around 20 minutes (10-minutes to any destination(s) and 10-minute return journey).

Design, Wellbeing and Placemaking

In order to measure how well our existing communities already meet the ambitions of the local living concept, the Council has developed a map-based tool to plot the location of 17 different services including shops, greenspace, leisure and learning across all Settlement Development Areas and Growing Communities.   The tool then calculates the actual ten-minute walking radii (800m) around each service, with each of the 17 services 'weighted' according to importance. These weighing's are then amalgamated to provide a numeric result for over 500,000 50metre hexagon cells across our communities. These 'cells' are then coloured coded to illustrate the findings in an easy-to-use interactive map, which is available here.

Over the summer, between 17 June to 16 August 2024 the Council has ran a consultation on this map-based tool and the methodology utilised in its creation. The consultation generated 27 responses with a total of 46 comments and were received from a range of parties, including individuals, community council's and community development organisations. A summary of the response, including the Council consideration is provided in as an Appendix to the paper (Appendix 1).   The Local Living mapping output for each settlement will be included within each relevant Area Profile.

In addition, it is proposed to use the Local Living Tool (along with other measures) to identify appropriate sites for allocation within the new HLDP and will also be utilised to consider small scale infrastructure improvements to existing communities to make them more attractive, safe and walkable places.

However, in the meantime, given the significant work which and public consultation that has been invested in this project, the accuracy of the data and the existing requirements of NPF4 to consider Local Living in the determination of current planning applications. It is proposed that the mapping resource is utilised as a material consideration in the determination of planning decision applications following Committee approval.

As the Local Living work to date only applies to settlements identified in the existing Local Development Plans and not the region more rural locales; and in accordance with advice from the Scottish Government which encourages its use across the whole of a region. The Council is giving consideration as to how the project could be used outwith settlements and as part of the evidence gathering for the HLDP, it is proposed to ask how this could be achieved as part of the consultation questions for this Unique Challenge.

3.0 Wellbeing:

NPF4 Policy 23 (Health & Safety) requires Local Development Plans to create healthier places by seeking opportunities for exercise, healthier lifestyles, land for community food growing and allotments, and awareness of locations of concern for suicide.

Health Eating:

The Highlands in renowned for its unmatched land, coast and water environment and natural, built and cultural heritage assets which make it an attractive place to live, work, exercise and to live a healthy lifestyle.

Nonetheless, the region is not immune from issues around the ability to access these assets and the prevalence of unhealthy food outlets and in compliance with the requirements set out in NPF4 Policies 27 (City, town, local and commercial centres), this Unique Challenge has identified the locations of drive-through facilities (table below) and will consider if the number and geographical spread of these facilities warrant any areas of specific planning policy, taking into account impacts and effects upon the existing network of roads, the existing retail
offering and distribution in an LDP area, and compatibility of drive throughs with wider uses.

Drive-through Facility	Location	Note
Burger King	Inverness Retail & Business Park, Inverness	
McDonald's	Inshes Retail Park, Inverness	
Costa Coffee	Inshes Retail Park, Inverness	
KFC	Millburn Road, Inverness	
Starbucks	Asda, Slackbuie, Inverness	
McDonald's	Nairn Retail Park, Nairn	
McDonald's	Fort William	
Costa Coffee	Fort William	
KFC	Fort William	Temporarily Closed

Play & Open Space:

NPF4 Policy 21 (Play, recreation & sport) requires Local Development Plans to identify sites for sports, play and outdoor recreation for people of all ages. This should be based on an understanding of the needs and demand in the community and informed by the planning authority's Play Sufficiency Assessment and Open Space Strategy.

The Council has already started preparing its Play Sufficiency Assessment and has to date surveyed all its existing formal play areas and the majority of private play areas, the reminder of which will be surveyed by the end of the year. Once these have been surveyed, the Council will prepare its Play Sufficiency Assessment, which will be consulted upon accordingly prior to the finalisation of the HLDP Evidence Report.

Additionally, the Council is preparing a 'Highland Play Strategy' which once adopted will outline the Council ambition for new and upgraded play facilities across both Council owned/managed sites and developer provide play facilities. As part of this strategy, details of Developer Contributions required for new and expanded play facilities under the existing Developer Contribution Supplementary Guidance requirements are proposed to be outlined.

The majority of the Council play areas are parts of much larger public open spaces which offer informal play and access to blue and green infrastructure. As part of the HLDP process, the Council will be preparing an Open Space Strategy, which includes areas of open space over 0.5ha within or adjacent to our settlements. This Open Space Strategy will inform any enhancements or expansion to the availability blue and green infrastructure, including the requirements for new allocations, which will take into account relevant agencies' plans or policy frameworks, such as flood risk and / or water management plans. In addition, any new provisions should be well-designed, high quality, accessible and inclusive.

Food Growing:

In terms of community food growing, the Council Chairs an 'Allotment Steering Group', which maintains a comprehensive list on the Council allotment sites, including total number of plots and a waiting list for these sites – which current shows 115 people are awaiting an allotment plot. In addition, the Steering Group maintains a Register of Interest by Ward of new people awaiting an allotment, copy of the September 2024 list is below:

Design, Wellbeing and Placemaking

Allotment site	Allotment Association	No. of total plots	No. of full sized plots	No. of half sized plots	No of other sized plots	No. of community plots	No. of plots with no tenant	Waiting list	No. waiting more than 5	Area
Lybster	Latheron, Lybster and Clyth Community Development Company/Lybster Allotments Association	21			5 large, 1 small plots + 15 polytunnel boxes	1	1 box	0	0	1316 m2
Hawthorn, Inverness	Hawthorn Allotments	69	21	48	0	0	0	85	0	14682 m2
Nairn Sandown		79	6 x 300m2, 14 x 200m2	11 x 150 m2, 24 x 100 m2, 7 x 75 m2	14	4	0			16456 m2
Nairn Mill Road	Nairn Allotment Society	43			33 plots + 9 raised beds	1	0	20	0	3885 m2
Ullapool	Lochbroom and Ullapool Gardens and Growers Society	65	60		5 (Inc Polytunnel plots)	3	1 (polytunnel plot)	0	0	3377 m2
Wick	Wick Allotments	11	9	2		1	0	0	0	2100 m2
Milnafua, Alness	Alness & District Allotment Society	24			24	2	0	10	0	2600 m2
Total		312						115	0	

The Council also maintains a waiting list separate to the one held by the individual allotment associations – this list shows that there is a demand for a total of an additional 296 allotment plots across the region and the Steering Group is working with allotment associations in Inverness, Dingwall, Aviemore and Culloden/Smithton. Aviemore, Dingwall and Culloden to provide additional capacity with a number of sites at the development stage.

Ward	20/21 Requests	21/22 Requests	22/23 Requests	23/24 Requests	Total Requests
1 (North, West, and Central Sutherland)	0	0	0	0	0
2 (Thurso and Northwest Caithness)	0	2	2	0	4
3 (Wick and East Caithness)	2	0	0	0	2
4 (East Sutherland and Edderton)	0	0	2	2	4
5 (West Ross, Strathpeffer, and Lochalsh)	0	0	2	0	2
6 (Cromarty Firth)	1	0	3	2	6
7 (Tain and Easter Ross)	4	0	1	2	7
8 (Dingwall and Seaforth)	2	0	5	4	11
9 (Black Isle)	0	2	3	6	11
10 (Eilean a' Cheò)	1	0	1	0	2
11 (Caol and Mallaig)	0	0	1	1	2
12 (Aird and Loch Ness)	1	0	2	3	6
13 (Inverness West)	5	1	12	16	34
14 (Inverness Central)	7	5	12	14	38
15 (Inverness Ness-Side)	4	3	6	9	22
16 (Inverness Millburn)	2	0	9	9	20
17 (Culloden and Ardersier)	5	1	12	17	35
18 (Nairn and Cawdor)	0	2	0	4	6
19 (Inverness South)	4	2	11	13	30
20 (Badenoch and Strathspey)	2	1	4	36	43
21 (Fort William and Ardnamurchan)	0	2	5	4	11
Total	40	21	93	142	296

The Council has and is working with a number of community groups in the establishment of community orchards, gardens and other food growing spaces across the region, these areas are not specifically recorded, but a number are located on Council owned lands, there development is however supported through the Growing Our Future - A Community Food Growing Strategy for Highland. The Council currently does not record any private allotments operating across the region.

Water Refill Taps:

In compliance with the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, this Unique Challenge will consider the existing locations of publicly available Water Refill locations provided by Scottish Water under their 'Top Up Tap' programme and will include a statement of the planning authority's proposed policies and proposals on the expansion of these.

Public Toilets:

In addition, also in compliance with the above Act, the Council will review its public toilets provision, along with its privately run 'Comfort Scheme' and will include a statement of the planning authority's proposed policies and proposals on the location and access to these.

Suicide:

With reference to the locations of concern for suicide, the Planning Service has already been working with the Suicide Prevention User Group to address the suicide risk posed by a number of sites, which has led to several physical interventions already being implemented. The Planning Service remains part of the User Group and will assist (where sought) to provide improvements to other sites considered to be a risk.

Air Quality:

Air quality is monitored across Highland in accordance with the UK National Air Quality Strategy (external link). The Highland Council undertakes annual air quality reviews of their areas to make sure the National Air Quality Objectives (external link) will be achieved. The pollutants that are assessed are:

- Benzene
- Carbon monoxide
- 1,3-butadiene
- Lead

- Nitrogen dioxide
- Sulphur dioxide
- Fine particles

If the objective for a pollutant is exceeded or predicted to be exceeded by the required date for compliance, the local authority must declare the affected area an Air Quality Management Area (external link). The authority must then draw up and implement an action plan to reduce pollution levels in the specified area. Highland has one Air Quality Management Area in Inverness City Centre.

HwLDP Policy 73 (Air Quality) helps to inform and determine applications which could have an impact on air quality, alongside the more recent NPF4 Policy 23 (Health & Safety). As part of the evidence report the Council will review both and consider if there is a need for a new Highland policy on air quality.

4.0 Retailing

City, town, local and commercial centres

Highland, like much of the world has seen a significant change in retailing in recent years, initially led by out of centre retail growth, and then in more recent times the growth of online retailing, which now accounts for more than 30% of the UK total[1]. This has led to a rise in vacancy rates from 8.1% in 2018 to 18.4% in 2022 across Highland, but individual areas have experienced differing impacts with vacancy rates rising in Wick to 24.5%, whilst Portree vacancy rates sits at just 2.5%. A number of town centre have looking to revitalise themselves through diversification, retail space reduction, urban realm improvements and collaborative working through the likes of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), with BIDs established in the following areas:

Business Improvement District	Renewal Date
Fort William	30 November 2029
Dornoch	28 February 2029
Inverness	1 March 2028
Nairn	30 September 2028
Visit Inverness Loch Ness	31 March 2029

[1] https://www.statista.com/statistics/286384/internet-share-of-retail-sales-monthly-in-the-united-kingdom-uk/#:~:text=In%20November%202023%2C%20the%20value,percent%20of%20total%20retail%20sales.

Moving forward the Council wishes to support and deliver sustainable city, town & local centres across the whole region by seeking opportunities for enhancements, expansion and diversify to improve the resilience of existing commercial centres.

The two most recent Council's area LDPs (IMF2 adopted 2024 and WestPlan adopted 2019) both include 'Town Centre First' policies. With IMF2LDP noting the principle of the policy is to '…reinforce the role of town centres as the heart of our communities..' and will achieve this by '…direct(ing) all significant footfall generating development to the main town centres of the Plan area, has been strengthened to tighten up on out of town retail, provide greater support for town centre living and increase flexibility for repurposing existing buildings. The aim is to help attract a wide range of uses which are active throughout the day and evening…'.
All three Council area LDPs have identified city and town centres boundaries across the main settlements, these were developed to safeguard the main retail and service centres.

Additionally, HwLDP, has a long-established policy (Policy 91: Retail Development) which was designed to encourage economic growth and urban realm improvements within Highland's City, towns and village.
More recently NPF4 (2023) Policies 27 (City, town, local and commercial centres) & 28 (Retail) have provided an up-to-date policy direction and advises new LDPs should include the identify of a network of centres that reflect the principles of 20minute neighbourhoods and town centre vision.

NPF4 also states that local development plans should use evidence on where clustering of non-residential uses may be adversely impacting on the wellbeing of communities, identify areas where drive-through facilities may be acceptable in locations where they will not negatively impact on the principles of local living or sustainable transport, and identify areas where proposals for healthy food and drinks outlets can be supported.

In terms of retail provision, NPF4 requires Local Development Plans to consider where they may be a need for additional retail space, with NPF4 suggesting this can be done by:

- A retail study which identifies deficiencies in retail provision in terms of quality and quantity in an area, and:

- On allocated housing sites or the creation of new communities, in terms of the need for neighbourhood shopping, and supporting local living.

The Council will utilise the most up to date Town Centre Health Check as a starting point for reviewing the supply and demand of retail provision and the boundaries for the city and town centre approach within HLDP. The latest published 'Town Centre Health Checks' (TCHCs) were prepared in summer of 2022 and have been updated over the summer of 2024, but are yet to be formally published, but will be done so shortly.

Out of Centre Retail

Beyond the city and town centres identified within the Council Town Centre Health Checks, there are a number of smaller retail centres across the region, especially within Inverness, including:

Commercial Centre
Crown Shopping Area
Milton of Leys
Charleston
Holm Mills
Slackbuie
Culloden Shopping Centre
Merkinch

In addition, across Highland there is a number of out-of-centre commercial areas, which have also expanded and diversified over recent years, namely:

Commercial Centre	Location
Inverness Shopping Park	Inverness
Inshes Retail Park	Inverness
Telford Retail Park	Inverness
Balmakeith Business Park	Nairn
North Road Retail Park	Fort William

As part of the Evidence Gathering, the Council will consider the identification of a 'network of centres' around these locations to reflect the principles of local living, which also reviews ways to improve sustainable connections to these centres. As part of the consultation, we will seek information on which sites could be included, appropriate categories and ways to improve sustainable access to them.

Design, Wellbeing and Placemaking

5.0 Historic Assets & Places

NPF4 Policy 7 (Historic Assets & Places) requires Local Development Plans to identify, protect and enhance valued historic assets and places through sustainable management. Across the Highland Council region, we have a range of designated features that are summarised below. However, as the primary source of historic environment data the Highland Historic Environment Record (HER) is a considerable maintained dataset. In addition, Buildings at Risk Register, Canmore, Highland Archaeological Research Framework, also provide a valuable resource.

30 conservation areas have been designated, each of which has special architectural or historic interest, which the Council wishes to protect or enhance their appearance or character. As part of the HLDP work the Council is starting a body of work in reviewing the existing Conservation Areas, including undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals and reviewing if further areas warrant Conservation Area status.

The Council also has a large number (####) of Listed Buildings, which are considered buildings of special architectural or historical importance and are designated by Historic Environment Scotland. However, the Council is aware there is a number of locally important buildings that are not included on the statutory list and the Council will consider if there is sufficient need and evidence to develop a 'local list' and any policy protection this list could require.

It is estimated that 95% of the Highland known archaeological resource is undiscovered and instead is managed through the development process, any finds are included in the HER. The Highlands are home to a number (###) of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM), which are archaeological sites that are of national or international importance. Any work that directly impacts on a SAM, or indirectly impacts on the setting of a SAM, require Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) which is granted by Historic Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Ministers.

The Highland area has a number of sites included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (45) and Inventory Battlefields. These areas don't have the statutory protection that is afforded to listed buildings and scheduled monuments; however, being included on the Inventory does mean that a site's cultural significance can be taken into account in the planning process. The Council will also consider evidence if there is sufficient need and evidence to develop a 'local list' of 'locally developed landscapes' and any policy protection this list could require

Design, Wellbeing and Placemaking

Across the region there is a significant number of derelict or under used buildings and the Council is keen for a variety of reasons to ensure these are brought back into regular use. The Council will therefore consider investigate preparing a list of such buildings and will review the policy landscape to ensure these buildings can be appropriately reused.

NPF4 requires LDPs to sustainably manage historic assets and to do so, evidence will be considered on the need to develop further policy and advice on how historic assets can be adapted for climate change; including ensuring the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) process is fit for purpose in relation to historical buildings.

As part of the HLDP evidence gathering stage a review of all these sources (and any others identified) will be undertaken to identify specific challenges, main issues and evidence gaps. Additionally, the Council proposes to review the planning policy requirements outlined in NPF4 and consider if there is any need to maintain or expand on the previous policies contained in HwLDP.

Consultation Questions

Question 1 – How could the Council consider and implement the Local Living agenda across the wider accessible rural and remote rural areas of Highland?

Question 2 – What categorises should be included within the Council 'Network of Centres' retail hierarchy.

Question 3 – NPF4 seeks to support proposals to improve sustainable access to the existing commercial centres (listed above). Considering these centres what appropriate interventions could be done to improve the sustainable access to them?

Appendix 1 – Local Living in Highland – Consultation Report

In the city of Inverness and Highland's towns and villages, the local living concept aims to reinforce and create new neighbourhoods that are attractive, safe, walkable places where people of all ages and abilities can access services, greenspace, learning and leisure within a walk of around 20 minutes (ten minutes to any destination(s) and 20 minute return journey).

The Highland Council are developing a tool to help assess how well our places meet the principles of local living. A review of approaches taken elsewhere in the UK was carried out to inform an appropriate methodology for the Highland Council area. Thereafter, a map-based tool was developed using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to plot the location of a variety of services including shops, greenspace, leisure and learning within over 100 of Highland's largest settlements. GIS was then used to measure the accessibility to these services within a ten minute walking distance (800m) and presented the findings on an easy to use interactive map.

Scottish Government Guidance and the Council recognise that communities and businesses have an important role to play in informing local living. As such the Council held a public consultation on the map based local living tool. Views were sought on the tool in terms of the services included, the level of importance given to each service, accuracy and what approaches we could take to rural areas.

The consultation ran for a nine week period from the 17 June to 16 August 2024. The consultation was publicised in a number of ways:

- issuing two Council Press Releases;
- through social media (Council's Facebook page, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn);
- by email to all Community Councils, those on the Development Plans consultation database and other interest groups;
- requesting libraries to display posters, provide weblinks and assistance; and
- officers took a stall at the Highland Youth Parliament 2024 at Inverness Leisure.

Feedback was sought using an online form. The Council received 27 responses to the consultation with a total of 46 comments. The comments were received from a range of parties, including individuals, community council's and community development organisations. A summary of comments and responses is provided below.

Once finalised, the tool will then form an important part of the evidence base for our new Highland Local Development Plan. It will help us prepare a settlement hierarchy for Highland, consider which areas may be suitable for new development, and the kinds of services and infrastructure needed to support them. It can also help assess new development proposals against the principles of local living and may be used by other Council services to inform future infrastructure investment decisions.

Summary Of Comments Received on Local Living In Highland Consultation And Responses

Summary of Comments	**Response & Reasons**
Question 1a Services: For the majority of people's daily needs are the services listed important?	
• 16 responses • All agreed that the services listed were important	Noted, the 22 services listed will continue to be included in the local living mapping.
Question 1a Services: Are there any other services that should be included or what services should be excluded and why?	
Suggestions for other services to include	
• Youth Centres/Youth Services • Reasons - vital services that provide respite, social opportunities, learning, personal development, relationships with youth workers who can support wellbeing, and much more for young people across Highland. Also provide important respite and resources for families.	The wide ranging benefits of youth centres and services are accepted. It is understood that the majority of youth centres and services in Highland operate within existing community centres. The Local Living mapping identified leisure/community facilities and recognised their importance by assigning a weighting of 0.8 in terms of importance.

Design, Wellbeing and Placemaking

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
• Adult care, including care at home, day care and nursing care (including residential care)	These types of services, whilst recognised as important within communities for the provision of care, are unlikely to be required to meet people's daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home.
• Council Service Point • Reasons - appreciate people may not need to visit Service Points regularly however if there is a significant distance to travel this can present difficulties, especially for low income households.	It is accepted that Council Service Points provide an important range of services for members of the public, particularly those who are unable to use online services. However, given the infrequency of visits for most people, it was not considered to be a service important to measuring and promoting Local Living in Highland.
• Cycle hire location	The inclusion of this service was considered, however, given the focus of study is on local living, i.e. reaching destinations that allow for local living within 10 minutes walking distance of people's homes, it was not considered appropriate for cycle hire locations to be included.
• Car Club location	The inclusion of this service was considered, however, given the focus of study is on local living, i.e. reaching destinations that allow for local living within 10 minutes walking distance of people's homes and that travel by car is the lowest priority of sustainable transport, it was not considered appropriate for car club locations to be included.
• Access to the natural environment (rather than just woodland) • Reasons - important service that well designed places should provide. Not clear why only woodland is currently included.	The term woodland was used to identify areas of woodland within and close to settlements. It was limited to woodland due to the technical limitations of GIS and Ordinance Survey base mapping as well as the availability of data and resources. It is agreed that the inclusion of a wider range of green and blue

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
For example access to the water environment is an important aspect of local community planning and wellbeing in the Highlands. Could include open heath, beaches etc.	networks would be beneficial to be included within the local living mapping as they are likely to be areas that are important to communities that are visited frequently. Inclusion of additional areas will be considered as part of the anticipated annual update to the tool, may include, for example, data from the Council's forthcoming Open Space Strategy.
• Community meeting place • Reasons – important facilities with a different, and more important role than community sports facilities.	For the purposes of the Local Living mapping community meeting places were included with the community, leisure and sports facility service and therefore already identified within the mapping.
• Dentist	The inclusion of this service was considered, however given the infrequency that the majority of people visit the dentist it was considered to be of limited importance for local living.
• Employment opportunities	National Planning Framework 4 and the Scottish Government's Planning Guidance on Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods both explain that access to employment opportunities are vital for local living. Consideration was given to the inclusion of employment opportunities within the local living mapping however, given the level of data required to underpin the location of opportunities and the level of unknown data, for example the number of employment opportunities at each location, it was felt resource did not allow for this data to be meaningfully included.
• Emergency Service Stations	It was felt that most people were unlikely to require these services regularly and it was not important for these services to be within a 10 minute walking

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
	distance of people's homes. Ambulance and fire stations, for example, are not required to be accessible to visiting members of the public. Rather, these services are usually accessed by phone and arrive by vehicle.
• Water, Sewerage and drainage	These services are essential utilities to be provided within people's homes rather than services people access regularly within a short distance of their home. It would therefore be inappropriate for these services to be included within the Local Living mapping.
• Handymen • Road maintenance • Park Rangers	These services are not destinations for the provision of services and therefore not appropriate to be included within the local living mapping.
Question 1a Services: Other Comments	
Quality/Availability of services • The quality of a community hall can vary greatly, for example in terms of warmth, acoustics and damp. • Methodology flawed as it does not reflect capacity and availability of services, for example GP Surgeries and offering within sports centres • If dentist were to be included members of the community may be preventing from accessing it due to capacity pressures. Families may be forced to travel	Quality/Availability of services • It is noted that the quality, availability and capacity of services can vary greatly and this may affect the likelihood or frequency of the service being used by communities. However, it is beyond the resource and scope of the Local Living mapping work to assess the quality of services. The Development Plans Team have been running a complementary survey, known as the Place Standard Tool, it is a qualitive survey that asks people what makes for a good place to live, work play and visit. • Measuring the capacity of services was beyond the scope of developing the Local Living Tool. Other work as part of Evidence

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
significant distances to access a dentist with capacity. Naming of Services • Other shop is a bit vague – for example in rural areas a general merchants selling multiple goods is extremely useful but difficult to classify. • Woodland - strange term to use, unclear what it means. Other Comments • Consider including bus service routes where they are proving not to be commercially viable. • Consideration of an integrated public transport system. • Introduction of flights from Wick to Edinburgh and Kirkwall would benefit the community greatly.	Gathering for the new HLDP is being undertaken on infrastructure capacity. Community views on the suitability of services may be captured as part of the Place Standard Tool. Naming of Services • The Technical Development Note for the mapping tool (available to download from the online consultation portal) provided a description of the 'other shops' that were included within this service. Each other shop scored 0.2 within a settlement development area up to a maximum of 1. It is appreciated that a general merchant selling multiple goods in a rural area may have greater value to local residents than in an urban area. Approaches to rural areas are to be given further consideration. • The term woodland was used due to identify areas of woodland within and close to settlements using data available from Ordnance Survey base mapping. It was limited to woodland due to the technical limitations of GIS and Ordinance Survey base mapping as well as the availability of data and resources. It is agreed that the inclusion of a wider range of green and blue networks would be beneficial to be included within the local living mapping as they are likely to be areas that are important to communities that

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
	are visited frequently. Inclusion of additional areas will be considered as part of the annual updated to the tool, may include, for example, data from the Council's forthcoming Open Space Strategy. Other Comments • Comments on lack of public transport and airport destinations are noted but outwith the scope of local living mapping.
Question 1b Scoring: For the majority of people is the score of importance given to each service is appropriate?	
• 18 responses • 44% agreed (8 respondents) • 55% did not agree (10 respondents)	It is noted that a significant proportion of respondents did not agree with the scoring given to the importance of each service. Suggestions for different scoring are outlined and discussed below. It is recognised that scoring for different services is likely to be subjective, often dependant upon the demographic of those responding. There were no overriding suggestions for changing the score of any particular service.
Question 1b Scoring: What service/s do you think should be scored differently and why?	
• Recycling Points • Comment - need to be at least 0.8 • Comment – should be 0.2	Recycling was given a weight of 0.4, meaning it was at the lower end of the scale in terms of importance for local living. It was given this score following a review of approaches taken elsewhere in the UK, an understanding of recycling services in Highland and officer judgement. There was no consistency in the suggestions for change and no reasons were provided. As such it is considered that a score of 0.4 remains appropriate.

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
• Food shop/Other shop • Comment – consider reducing score for food shop as single convenience shop may not reliably provide daily essentials, and increasing score for other shops that may provide for daily needs	It was felt that a food shop was one of the most important services that would facilitate local living as it would typically allow people to purchase daily essentials. Measuring the quality of services was beyond the scope of developing the Local Living Tool. Community views on the suitability of services may be captured as part of the Place Standard Tool. It is noted that 'other shops' which scored 0.2 may provide for daily needs, however these were considered less important than food shops.
• Pub, etc • Comment - should be scored 0.8 • Comment – should be scored 1	A 'pub, restaurant, café or takeaway' was scored 0.4. It is not considered appropriate to give these services a score as high as 0.8 or 1 as most people are unlikely to need these services as frequently as higher scoring services, for example schools and food shops.
• Banking • Comment - deserves a higher rating as it is an important service, particularly in more remote northern settlements for those that do not utilise online banking. Whilst a banking / Post Office hub is proposed the long-term view seems ongoing closure of banks north of Inverness. • Comment: should be scored 0.8	Banking was scored 0.4. Whilst a large proportion of banking customers use online banking services and many banking services are provided in post offices, given the Highland profile it is accepted that banking should be scored more highly. **It is recommended that the score for banking is increased to 0.6.**
• Library • Comment - Libraries are essential to many people in the Highland area, particularly for those on low	Libraries were given a score of 0.6. This is considered to continue to be a fair weighting given the proportion of adults that visit public libraries and how frequently they attend.

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
incomes to access a range of resources. • Comment – should be 0.8	
• Third spaces such as theatres, cafes, and art galleries • Score should be higher given the vital role these play in providing space for social wellbeing and cultural experiences. • Comment – should be 0.6	Art galleries, museums, theatres, cinemas and cultural centres were given a score 0.2 for a large of part of the community – this was to reflect that these are considered desirable by some people less frequently, and therefore not essential for most people very regularly. Therefore, whilst it is accepted these services play an important role, they are not considered essential for local living and the score of 0.2 remains. Rather these are the types of service that communities are likely to be willing to travel further to reach.
• Hospital (two comments) • Hospitals and emergency services • Comment: 1	A hospital was given a score 0.2 – this was to reflect that hospitals are accessed by most people less frequently, and therefore not essential for most people very regularly, and are often regarded as a regional facility that, depending on people's needs accept they may need to travel further afield for. No reasons were given for raising the importance of the hospitals. It is therefore considered appropriate for the score of 0.2 to remain. For the reasons described above emergency services are not considered relevant to enable local living.
• Other shop (for example clothing) • Comment – should be 0.8	Other shops were given a score of 0.2. One reason for this was if there were large number of shops in a given area a total score could potentially be very high. Whilst other shops may provide goods important to enable local living, food shops were

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
	considered the most important and therefore given a score of 1. No reasons were given for raising the scoring of other shops and therefore considered appropriate for it to remain the at 0.2.
• Adult Care • Comment – should be scored 1	For the reasons described above it was not considered appropriate for adult care to be included as an additional local living service.
• Employment opportunities • Comment – should be scored 1	For the reasons described above it was not considered appropriate for employment opportunities to be included as an additional local living service.
• Woodland • Comment – not essential to be within very close proximity, suggest 0.6 as not required daily	It was considered that access to woodland was of high importance and scored 1. The definition of woodland does currently include many different forms of woodland, including, for example wooded paths within and close to settlements that communities may use frequently. Additionally, given that the inclusion of additional areas of green and blue networks may be included as part of future mapping, it is continued to be considered that the score of 1 for woodland remains appropriate.
• GP Surgery • Comment – not essential to be within very close proximity as not required daily. • Comment – should be scored 0.6 or 0.8	A GP Surgery was scored 1 as it was considered to be essential for most people regularly. It is agreed that GP surgeries may be visited less frequently than other services that scored 1, and also some of those that scored 0.8. **As such it is recommended that the score for a GP Surgery is reduced to 0.6.**
• Post Office • Comment – should be scored 1	Post office was scored 0.6 because it provides services that are likely to be important for some people fairly frequently. Services provided by Post

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
	Office are increasingly available online, for example the collection of parcels from home and direct payments of pensions into bank accounts. Despite this, it is understood that Post Offices also provide some banking services which have become increasingly important given the number of bank closures. Whilst it is accepted that post offices provide essential services, it is considered the score should remain 0.6 given the frequency most people may visit a post office.
• Cash Point • Comment – should be scored 0.4	Cash point was scored 0.8 as, despite the rise in the use of electronic payment methods, access to cash remains important for many people reasonably frequently. No reasons were given for reducing the scoring of cash points and therefore it continues to be considered appropriate for a score of 0.8 to remain.
• Religious Meeting Space • Comment – should be 0.2	Religious meeting space was scored 0.6 because they are considered to provide services that are likely to be important for some people fairly frequently. No reasons were given for reducing the scoring of cash points and therefore it continues to be considered appropriate for a score of 0.6 to remain.
• Allotments • Comment – should be 0.6	Allotments were scored 0.2 because they were considered to be important for some people less frequently. Given the likely limited proportion of the communities who have access to an allotment, and that no reasons were given for a change to the score, it continues to be considered appropriate for a score of 0.2 to remain.
Question 1b Scoring: Other Comments	

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
• The tool does not work for remote scattered communities, including Kinlochewe, Torridon (Fasaig), Annat, Inveralligin, Wester Alligin and Diabaig. • Methodology flawed as it does not reflect capacity and availability of services, for example GP Surgeries and offering within sports centres • Do not consider the weighting of the scores is very relevant to smaller rural communities. • Scoring woodland significantly higher than shops and hospitals gives a distorted view of the sustainability of rural communities. • The type and score of importance of services for 'most people' is very approximate as it all depends on life stage and this varies with local demography. • Public Transport does not appear to exhibit a joined-up strategy for timetables. Particular difficulties arise when trains are cancelled at short notice.	• Comments regarding rural areas are noted, options for a tailored approach to rural areas is being explored. • It is recognised that there are many wide-ranging views on both which services are important and the relative importance of each service. This applies especially at different life stages (young people, families, elderly etc.) and in different areas. How far such different needs are considered is an important question beyond the scope of this project, instead an approach attempting to cover a wide range of identified preferences was taken here. The modelled approach however can easily be re-used/amended to use different services and different weightings if this is required. • Comments on lack of public transport integration are noted but out with the scope of local living mapping.
Q2. Are the location of services in settlements you are familiar with accurate?	
• 9 Responses • 3 Yes	It was anticipated that there was likely to be a number of inaccuracies given the scale of services

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
• 6 No	mapped across Highland, and that there are frequent changes to services available. The inaccuracies have been noted and will be checked and corrected as part of a planned annual update to mapping.
If no, are there services missing or services in the wrong place?	
• Kinlochewe Primary School (currently mothballed) is in Incheril and is not identified but is a ten minute walk from the edge of Kinlochewe.	• Currently mothballed primary schools were excluded from the local living mapping as they are not operational. If the school were to re-open it would be included in the mapping part as part of a planned annual update to mapping.
• A building identified as a church in Netwonmore is now a private residence.	• The accuracy of this comment will be verified and if required the mapping updated as part of the anticipated annual update.
• Arisaig GP surgery is shown but has been closed for several years and there appears to be no prospect of it re-opening.	• The accuracy of this comment will be verified and if required the mapping updated as part of the anticipated annual update.
Ardgay • Church and the small meeting room in the car park are for sale and the church is no longer used. • The Gearrchoille Community Wood is widely used for recreation is not noted. • Requests explanation why northern Ardgay scores higher than the more central area that has a range of services.	Ardgay • The status of the church and meeting room will be verified and if required the mapping updated as part of the anticipated annual update. • Gearrchoille Community Wood within southern Ardgay is included within the mapping and scored accordingly. • Northern Ardgay scores higher due to the presence of the Primary School and Nursery in this area.

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
• Wishes the profile of Ardgay can be updated to be accurate and avoid issues at later plan stages. Bonar Bridge • Bonar Bridge and Ardgay share facilities. • Church there is also up for sale and no longer used. • The Hub is marked as a cafe but is also used as an integrational activities hub. • Bradbury Day Care Centre is missing. • Migdale Hospital is missing.	Bonar Bridge • It is noted that these are close by to each other and share facilities. Options for an approach to rural areas, with the potential of identifying networks of rural settlements is being explored. • The status of the church will be verified and if required the mapping updated as part of the anticipated annual update. • It is noted that The Hub offers range of services in addition to a café. The mapping will be updated as part of the anticipated annual update. • Day care centres were not included as part of the local living mapping. • Only hospitals with emergency or minor injury services were included in the mapping. Migdale Hospital is understood not to provide this service.
• Edinbane post office is shown but opening is limited to two hours per week.	• It is noted that the opening hours of some services are limited. However, it was beyond the resource and scope of the Local Living mapping work to include information on availability. Community views on the suitability of services may be captured as part of the Council's ongoing Place Standard Tool consultation described above.
• No information is shown for less populated areas, requests if information could be shown. It is	• Options for an approach to more rural areas is being explored.

<table>
<tr><th>Summary of Comments</th><th>Response & Reasons</th></tr>
<tr><td>inevitable that the higher populated areas will be those with access to more services.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Q3. Do you have any thoughts/ideas on how Highland could achieve the principles of local living in the creation of resilient, sustainable communities in our rural areas?</td></tr>
<tr><td>• 17 responses
• All responded yes</td><td>Many valuable comments were provided in response to this question. As part of the Highland Local Development Plan Evidence Gathering consultation the principles of local living in rural areas explored further as part of the consultation. The comments received and summarised in this section will be considered as part of the wider consultation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Methodology Comments
• The expected distance to local services is inevitably greater in rural areas.
• May be appropriate to increase the 20-minute walk criterion to a 20-minute cycle criterion.
• Where a change to the method of calculating scores is made, this must be done transparently, for example to have two scores for cells located in every geographical area - one for walkability and one for cyclability.
• A driving time criterion for rural areas would be inappropriate as it is not consistent with the concept described in Scottish Government Planning Guidance on Local</td><td>• The use of a 20 minute cycle time to help assess local living in rural communities will be explored.
• Comments are noted on the reasons for a drive time criteria being inappropriate under existing guidance as well potential for community and public transport are noted.</td></tr>
</table>

Design, Wellbeing and Placemaking

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods. • Some excellent work has already been done to determine the best way to implement the 20-minute neighbourhood idea in more rural areas in the Living Well Locally, 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands (Sustrans and Hi Trans, 2022) • Ideas suggested include considering more sustainable, though non-active, travel modes such as community and public transport, being less prescriptive about the 20 minutes travel time and including the ability to obtain goods and services through courier or drone delivery.	
Transport • Improved road connections from single to twin track for access to services in the east and to employment centres at Kishorn would significantly improve the sustainability of the Lochcarron and district community. • Needs to be improved and more reliable public transport, including ferry crossings, to enable rural	The focus of many of these comments are on services and infrastructure that would aid the creation of resilient, sustainable communities in rural areas. As outlined above, the detail of these comments will be considered as part of the wider Highland Local Development Plan Evidence Gathering Consultation.

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
communities to access services and employment. • Must provide services for those who do have access to a car, this can be for a number of reasons including environmental, unable to drive due to ill health, affordability and lack of access to taxi services. • Provide public bus services that go 'door to door'. • Public transport stops are of limited use if the services are intermittent or do not meet resident's needs. • Cater for those who are not able to travel actively due to age or ill health. • There should be segregated paths for pedestrians and cyclists to improve accessibility and safety. Housing • Increase supply of quality, affordable housing that meets local demands, particularly for young families and key workers. Economic Development	

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
• Increased levels of economic diversification are needed to retain and attract sufficiently diverse employment opportunities and to minimise inequalities. • Government should provide increased resources to remote more scattered communities within Highland. • Encourage young families to move to rural areas and start local businesses which will in turn cater for many of the principles of local living. • Provide rates reduction for first time small and medium enterprises opening new premises in rural areas. • Prevent large energy companies from exploiting and industrialising our rural areas with infrastructure which is not required for local communities. This will result in population decline and make rural communities less sustainable. Services • Encourage and support community voluntary projects	

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
and mutual aid initiatives, for example community-led libraries, community carpools and village-run allotments. • Utilise mobile services such as mobile libraries, banking and health services. • Re-open mothballed schools once population is increased to encourage community cohesion. Consultation • Consultation should use plain English to encourage participation and minimise electronic documentation. • Numerous community organisations in Highland provide support for local living and should be engaged with effectively. • Work with community councils and wider rural and island residents to understand the needs of their local communities to identify areas of difficulty and potential resolutions tailored to the population and area. Other Comments	

Design, Wellbeing and Placemaking

Summary of Comments	Response & Reasons
• Respondent lives in a remote, rural area and does not have access to any services listed with the exception of woodland, nearest services are approximately 13 miles distance. • Community charge takes no account of accessibility of services.	

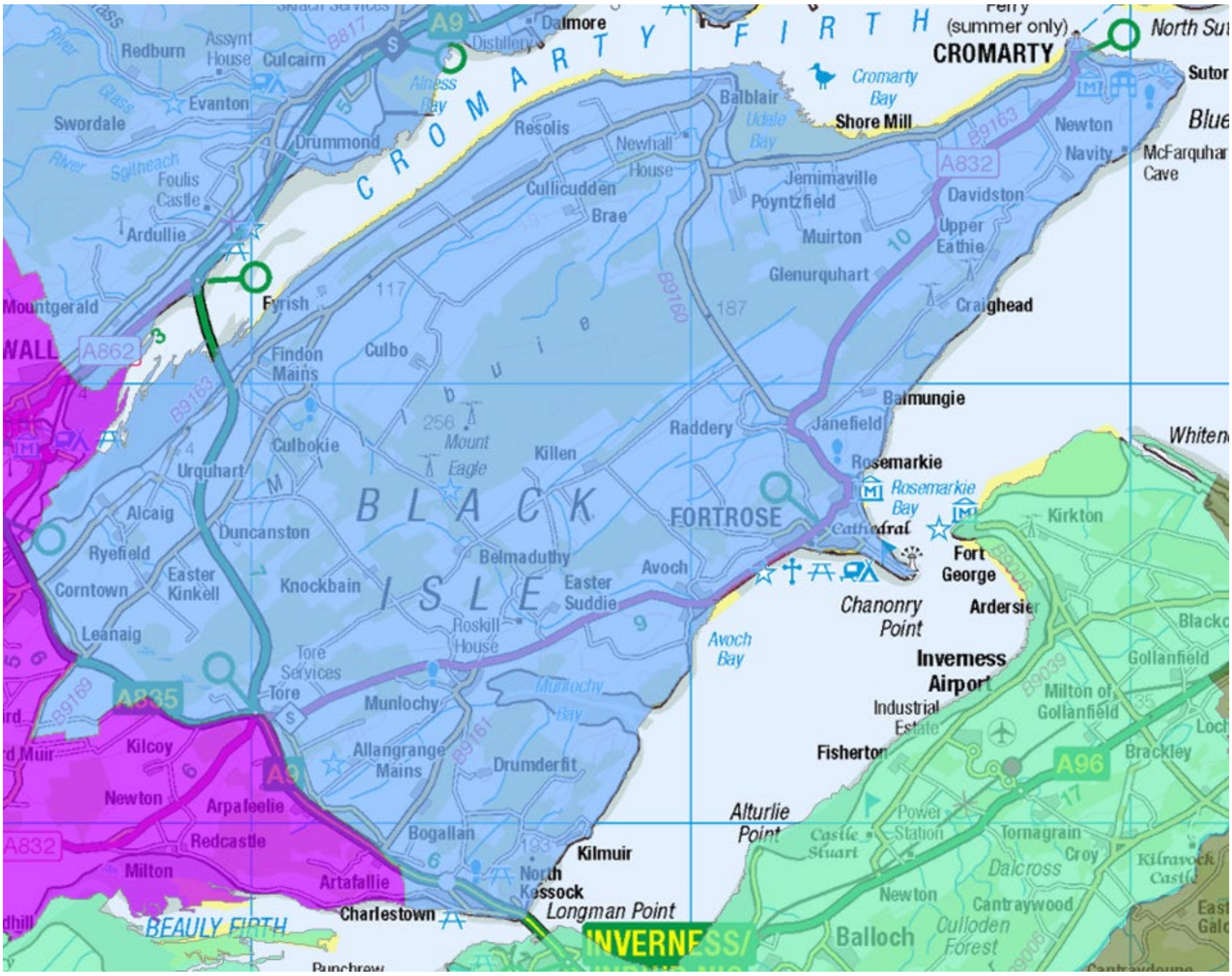
Using Highland's administrative Area Committee boundaries these papers provide an overview of the unique attributes and characteristics of our sub-regions that will shape the priorities and land use strategy and policies. Each of the Area Profiles contain the following:

- Map and Key Facts and Figures
- Character of the area
- How well does the area function?
- Summary of infrastructure capacity
- Place Plans and Outcomes
- Place Standard feedback
- Overview of Local Living Analysis and Mapping

Alongside the description of the unique issues we have also carried out a check of how the emerging evidence complies with national guidance for the forthcoming Evidence Report stage. Such requirements will be summarised in a separate paper that will be issued as part of the consultation material.

Black Isle Area Profile

1 Black Isle Area Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements are (main settlements defined within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 in order of sustainability) North Kessock, Avoch, Fortrose/Rosemarkie, Cromarty, Culbokie, Munlochy and Tore.

The Black Isle Area has a long history of coastal settlement because it occupies an important strategic position on Highland’s east coast guarding the Inverness and Cromarty Firth entrances, giving access to fishing opportunities and contains agriculturally productive land. However, it wasn’t opened up for significant growth until it was better joined to the “mainland” via the Cromarty and Kessock bridges, the latter opening in 1982. This “late development” in trunk road connectivity meant that it still accommodates little in the way of industrial development instead now concentrating on agricultural, forestry and tourism employment. Less desirably, many of the villages now have a primarily dormitory function for job opportunities in Inverness and other part of Mid and Easter Ross. This encourages car-based commuting to employment and other opportunities since the villages don’t have the "critical mass" scale to support local services and facilities or a commercial bus service to higher order centres where those facilities can be accessed.

The scenic quality of the local landscape, the townscape quality of its historic towns and villages and the natural heritage features principally around the coastal margins, all attract visitors and support tourism-based development and employment. The central upland spine of the Black Isle is less settled and given over to smaller, less productive agricultural units and forestry.

Key factual information is set out in Section 4 below.

3 How well does the Area function?

The Area has many locational and natural resource advantages compared to other parts of Highland. However, its infrastructure networks are spatially disconnected because its traditional coastal settlements are inadequately served by the trunk road network. Central settlements such as Tore benefit from trunk road connectivity but have wholly inadequate sewerage provision. Even North Kessock which is coastal, connected and functions as a suburb of the City of Inverness, is "bottlenecked" by the Kessock Bridge and the capacity issues at the Longman A9/A82 junction.

The lack of local employment opportunities has led to higher home working but also higher emission commuting, which has increased the need for improvements to public transport networks and strategic active travel routes. The proximity to Inverness has also magnified pressure for housing in the open countryside development and other "overheating" effects such as close to capacity medical and school facilities.

The historic cores of Cromarty, Rosemarkie, Fortrose, Avoch and Munlochy are an asset in townscape terms but also a challenge because the spine roads that pass through the villages have very limited capacity to support further development. Similarly, the clustered patterns of these settlements have little room for expansion hemmed in by glacial escarpments, prime farmland, flood risk areas, and high quality heritage resources. Accordingly, limited "organic" growth of the main settlements appears the most practicable way forward. Key priorities are to improve the safety of the trunk road junctions, to control sporadic housing in the countryside development, to make sure that the main towns and villages are self-sufficient as possible in terms of a mix of uses and local access to daily needs, and to encourage a higher proportion of longer distance journeys to be made by sustainable travel modes.

4 “Infrastructure First” Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within the Black Isle & Easter Ross Area there are 17,260 premises 10,008 (58%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 5,577 (32%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 1,675 (10%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities** – recently resolved (but developer contributions still payable), current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints at Avoch Primary and North Kessock - full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** - spare water capacity at sub-regional Loch Glass water source and works but local water network capacity issues at Fortrose/Rosemarkie, Culbokie, Tore and Munlochy. Sewage works capacity issues at Fortrose/Rosemarkie, Avoch and Tore and potential sewerage network capacity issues at all main settlements.
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments** – safety concerns concerning turning movements at most A835 and A9 trunk road junctions particularly at Munlochy (B9161) junction. Also, the capacity and safety of the A832 and B9161 as it passes through (rather than bypasses) the traditionally narrow main streets of Cromarty, Fortrose & Rosemarkie, Avoch and Munlochy. A Transport Scotland road safety study of the A9 between Tore and North Kessock is ongoing.
- **Health Facility Capacity** – the GP practice groups at Fortrose and Munlochy have (July 2024) patients per GP numbers in excess of the Highland average of 770 patients per GP but Cromarty has a much lower ratio (274).

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 10,517 (4.5% of Highland's population)
- **Population Change** - (2011-2022) +2.5% (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%)
- **Age profile** - (Census 2022) 0-16 (17.2%) 65+ (27.1%) (higher proportion of young and old than Highland (i.e. lower working age proportion), higher proportion of old than Scotland profile) – however falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023.
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** (Council Tax Data 2023 for Black Isle & Easter Ross committee area) 77.5%.
- **Households** – (Census 2022) 4,743 occupied households.
- **House Completions** - long term average 52 per year which is 5% of Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e.
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Area has a slightly lower (9%) proportion than Highland (10%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating and a higher (19%) proportion than Highland (13%) with the worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights that all data zones on the Black Isle are in the least deprived 50% of zones in Scotland - full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/.
- **Visitors to Highland** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK – most (75%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – half stayed in serviced accommodation – hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities.
- **Employment** – (Black Isle is part of Inverness Travel to Work Area 2023) – 52,000 (full and part-time employees) jobs (49% of Highland's jobs), gross average weekly full time pay £744.80.
- **Working from Home & Commuting** – (Ward data from Census 2022) – 33.8% of the workforce work mainly from home (higher than the Highland and Scotland averages) and 47% commute more than 10km to work (much higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- **Unemployment** – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active.
- **Employment sectors** – (2020 HIE data for Inner Moray Firth area) the top 3 employment sectors within the Inner Moray Firth area are: human health and social work (19.8%), wholesale and retail (14.8%) and accommodation and food services (11.1%).
- **Environmental and other constraints** - 56% of the Black Isle and Easter Ross Area is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Local Place Plan details via
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
'Opportunity Black Isle', a single Black Isle Local Place Plan covering the whole Area (and other land) will be registered in October 2024 - available via:
https://www.transitionblackisle.org/userfiles/file/highland%20council/planning/black%20isle%20place%20plan/240524%20bilpp%20final%20registered.pdf

The place plan comprises a hybrid between LPP and the Council's programme of 'Area Place Plans' – which provide an overview of local priorities for development and investment. As such, the Black Isle and Easter Ross Committee has adopted the plan as a Black Isle wide vision for a more sustainable and resilient future, bringing together actions by the local community, Community Planning Partners and others covering big issues such as "getting about", housing, community facilities, nature and the environment.

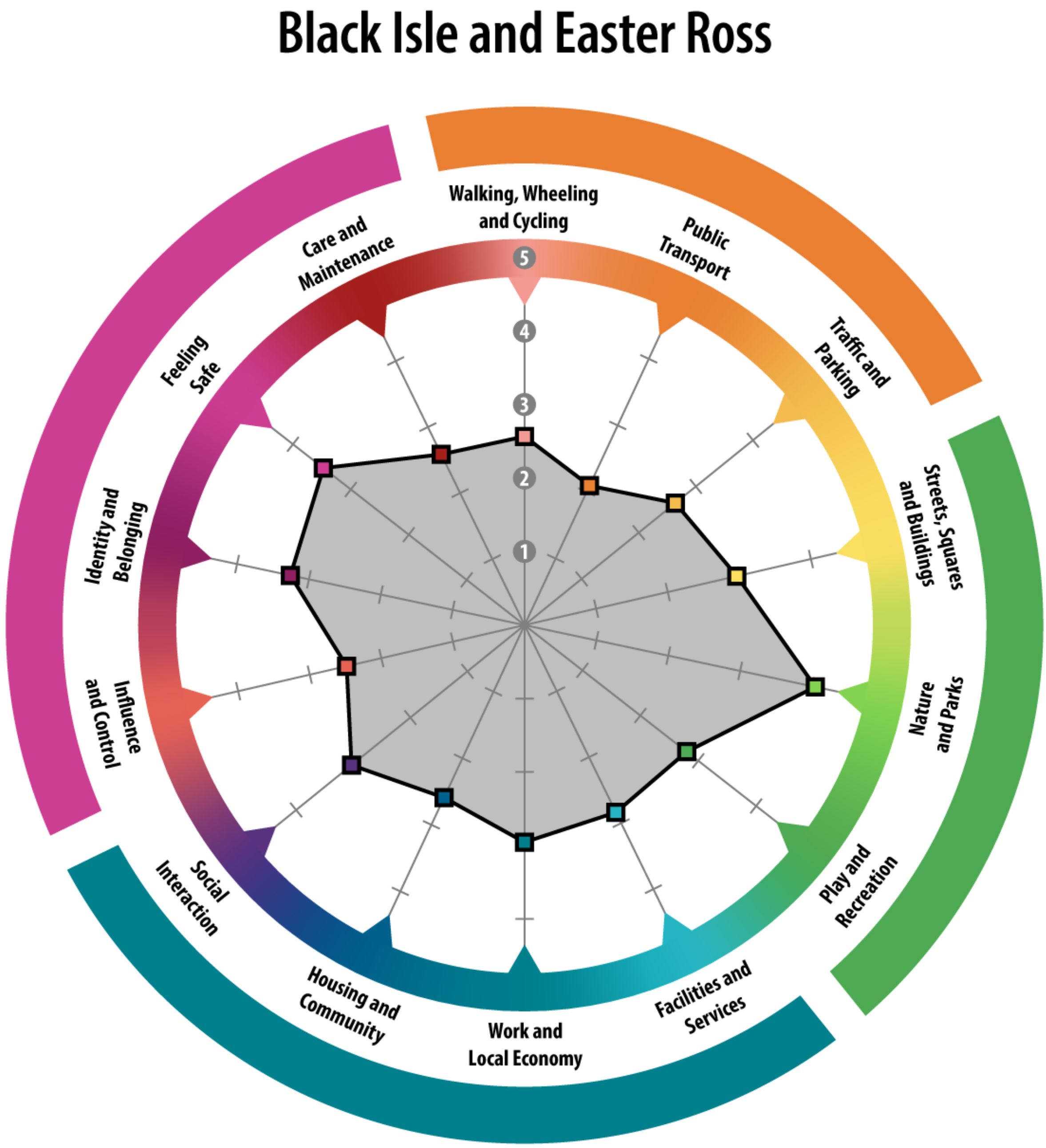
In Preparation
None.

Community Partnership Plan
Mid-Ross Community Partnership (CCP) has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive, the CP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area.

The Mid Ross Community Partnership has not prepared a Locality Plan for this Area.

6 Place Standard

Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).



Black Isle Average Score (3.2) is the highest among sub-regional areas in Highland.

However, the area's response rate for the Place Standard Survey was relatively low: 48 online responses, plus non-quantified engagement of local young people by HLH officers as part of summer activities.

Black Isle Area Profile

Highest scores for area: *Nature & Parks* (4.3); *Feeling Safe* (4.0); *Identity & Belonging (pride in place)* (3.6); *Play & Recreation* (3.5)

Lowest scores for area: *Public Transport* (2.2); *Traffic & Parking* (2.6); *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.7)

Domains for which the Black Isle compares well with rest of Highland:

- *Streets, Squares & Buildings* (3.3), *Care and Maintenance* (3.1) and *Influence & Sense of Control* (2.9), each scored highest among sub-regional areas in Highland
- scored highest in Highland.
- *Play & Recreation* (3.5) scored highest in Highland.
- *Facilities & Services* (3.2) scored second highest in Highland.

Domains for which the Black Isle scores low compared with rest of Highland: the area scored highly across all 14 domains of the Place Standard, compared to other sub-regional areas.

Qualitative Feedback

- The area offers a large number of accessible off-road paths, which enable enjoyment of the outdoors. However, accessibility issues for wheelchair users are a concern in public spaces, with calls for wider pavements, more drop curbs and improved path conditions.
- While active travel is particularly valued locally, concerns raised about road safety for cyclists, including potholes, poor road surfaces and traffic speeds.
- Local bus services are highly appreciated, but concerns raised over reliability, frequency, increased bicycle carriers on buses, and access for those with impaired mobility. Particular calls for better connections to Dingwall and later running services to support night time activity.
- Village greens, scenic areas, play areas, green spaces and historic architecture are generally well maintained. However, some concerns were raised over inadequate outdoor seating, buildings in need of repair, overgrown public spaces and blocked drains.
- Frequent local markets, events and volunteer led local maintenance and upkeep encourage social interaction and a sense of belonging.
- Demand for more diverse recreational options for teenagers, such as a skate park or pump track.
- Facilities such as schools, libraries, shops and medical facilities are generally regarded as being within accessible distances, although this often depends upon car travel. However, library hours are regarded as limited, and availability of health and dental appointments lacking.
- Residents continue to express interest in development of a local swimming pool.
- Improved digital connectivity across much of the area has increased feasibility of working at home.
- Housing is generally regarded as short in supply and unaffordable, particularly for young people.
- There is demand for affordable housing and commercial spaces to retain young residents and support recruitment by local businesses. There are calls for higher standards in construction, particularly in energy efficiency.
- The NC500 tourist route is regarded as having potential to boost local business and there is enthusiasm for continued community driven projects to enhance tourism infrastructure.
- Concern over adequacy of mental health support.

Youth concerns arising from HLH engagement:

- Public transport as unreliable and not feasible for return trips from Inverness to some settlements at the end of the day. Lack of bus stops in rural areas.
- The importance of existing community halls, youth café and access to outdoor activities.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Impacts of the cost of living crisis.
- Bullying and access to mental wellbeing support.

7 Local Living Outcomes

In the area of the **Black Isle and Easter Ross Committee Area** we surveyed **60859** Hex Cells

Of these **19162** - fall within SDAs or the area of Growing Settlements (Dingwall and Conon Bridge fringe cells excluded)
4571 Cells contain the **11861** Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells:

67.1% of residential properties are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (1264)** or **Highly Walkable (1877)**
7.1% of residential properties (326) have **Few or No Walkable services**

The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in **the Black Isle and Easter Ross Committee Area** Is **9.9** (out of a maximum possible of 16)

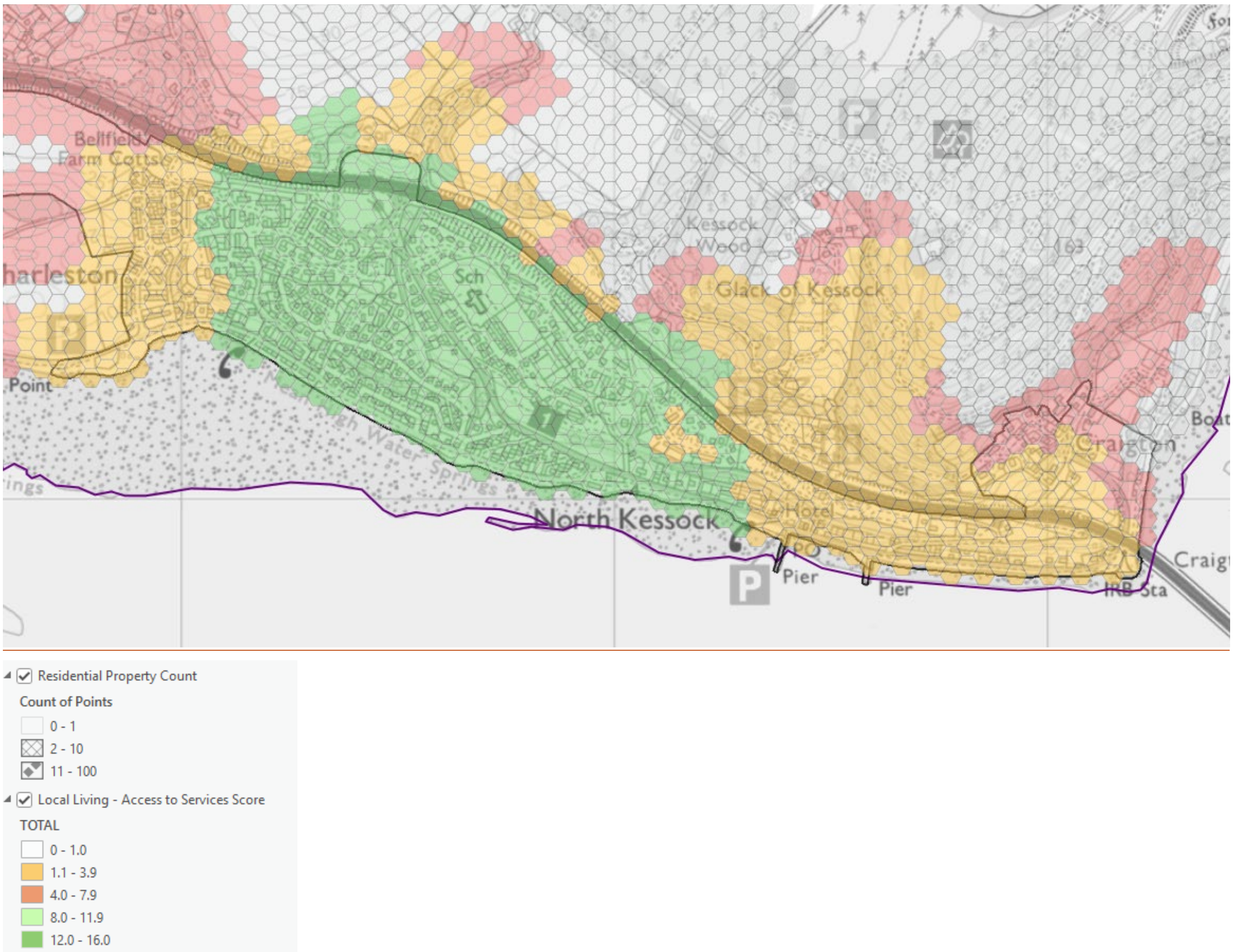
Cromarty SDA has the highest average residential score (at **13.4** per property)
Rhicullen/Newmore Growing Settlement area residential properties score an average of **2.7**

		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties						Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Name	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Total	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
SDA	North Kessock	709	299	637	5109.6	8.0	10.8	2.13	0	204	83	12	0	299	0.0%	68.2%	27.8%	4.0%	0.0%
SDA	Tore	249	40	47	266.0	5.7	7.2	1.18	0	0	40	0	0	40	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Avoch	593	219	539	5085.4	9.4	10.6	2.46	0	181	22	16	0	219	0.0%	82.6%	10.0%	7.3%	0.0%
SDA	Culbokie	380	209	319	2186.6	6.9	9.4	1.53	0	58	151	0	0	209	0.0%	27.8%	72.2%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Evanton	836	297	658	5378.4	8.2	10.0	2.22	0	208	40	47	2	297	0.0%	70.0%	13.5%	15.8%	0.7%
SDA	Invergordon	2206	534	1897	17545.8	9.2	15.2	3.55	162	183	124	65	0	534	30.3%	34.3%	23.2%	12.2%	0.0%
SDA	Alness	3082	984	2984	32859.0	11.0	15.6	3.03	420	299	241	22	2	984	42.7%	30.4%	24.5%	2.2%	0.2%
GS	Rhicullen_Newmore	3267	76	84	229.6	2.7	4.6	1.11	0	0	27	30	19	76	0.0%	0.0%	35.5%	39.5%	25.0%
SDA	Seaboard Villages	546	211	540	4227.0	7.8	11.8	2.56	0	120	78	13	0	211	0.0%	56.9%	37.0%	6.2%	0.0%
SDA	Tain	1897	598	1738	22001.0	12.7	15.6	2.91	363	113	115	4	3	598	60.7%	18.9%	19.2%	0.7%	0.5%
GS	Barbaraville	420	66	119	477.4	4.0	4.8	1.80	0	0	65	1	0	66	0.0%	0.0%	98.5%	1.5%	0.0%
GS	Milton of Kildary	2071	153	368	2644.4	7.2	9.0	2.41	0	71	26	49	7	153	0.0%	46.4%	17.0%	32.0%	4.6%
GS	Hill of Fearn	448	81	169	1483.8	8.8	9.4	2.09	0	77	4	0	0	81	0.0%	95.1%	4.9%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Inver	533	55	115	803.0	7.0	7.2	2.09	0	0	55	0	0	55	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Portmahomack	762	123	245	2347.4	9.6	10.0	1.99	0	111	2	10	0	123	0.0%	90.2%	1.6%	8.1%	0.0%
SDA	Munlochy	245	113	242	2733.0	11.3	11.8	2.14	0	107	4	2	0	113	0.0%	94.7%	3.5%	1.8%	0.0%
SDA	Fortrose and Rosemarkie	918	513	1160	11778.4	10.2	14.2	2.26	207	144	140	22	0	513	40.4%	28.1%	27.3%	4.3%	0.0%
SDA	Cromarty	262	113	355	4768.2	13.4	13.6	3.14	112	1	0	0	0	113	99.1%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		19424	**4684**	**12216**	**121924.0**	**10.0**	**15.6**	**2.61**	**1264**	**1877**	**1217**	**293**	**33**	**4684**	**27.0%**	**40.1%**	**26.0%**	**6.3%**	**0.7%**

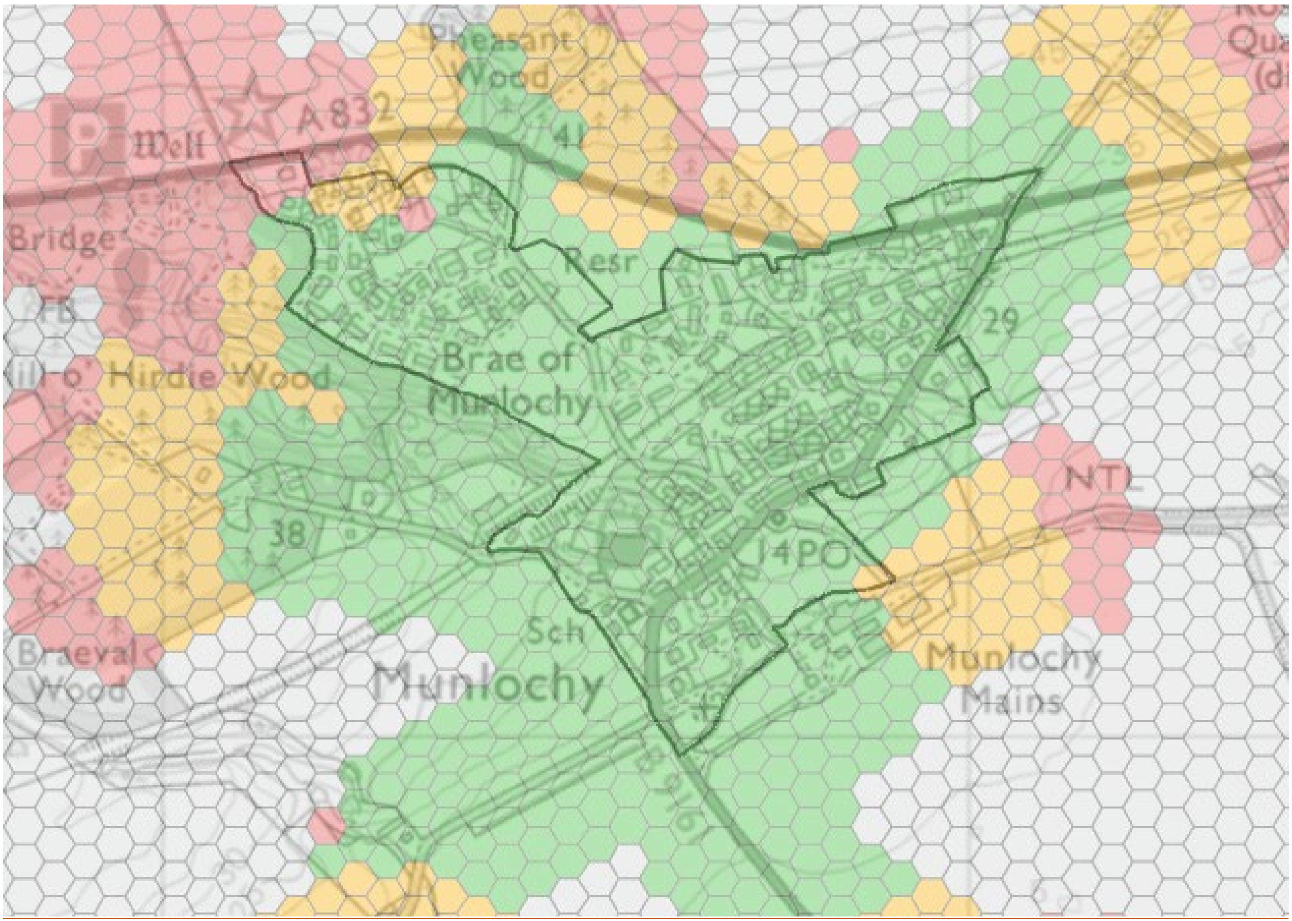
Full details via Local Living Mapping (arcgis.com)

Appendix – Local Living Outcomes Maps for Main Settlements

North Kessock

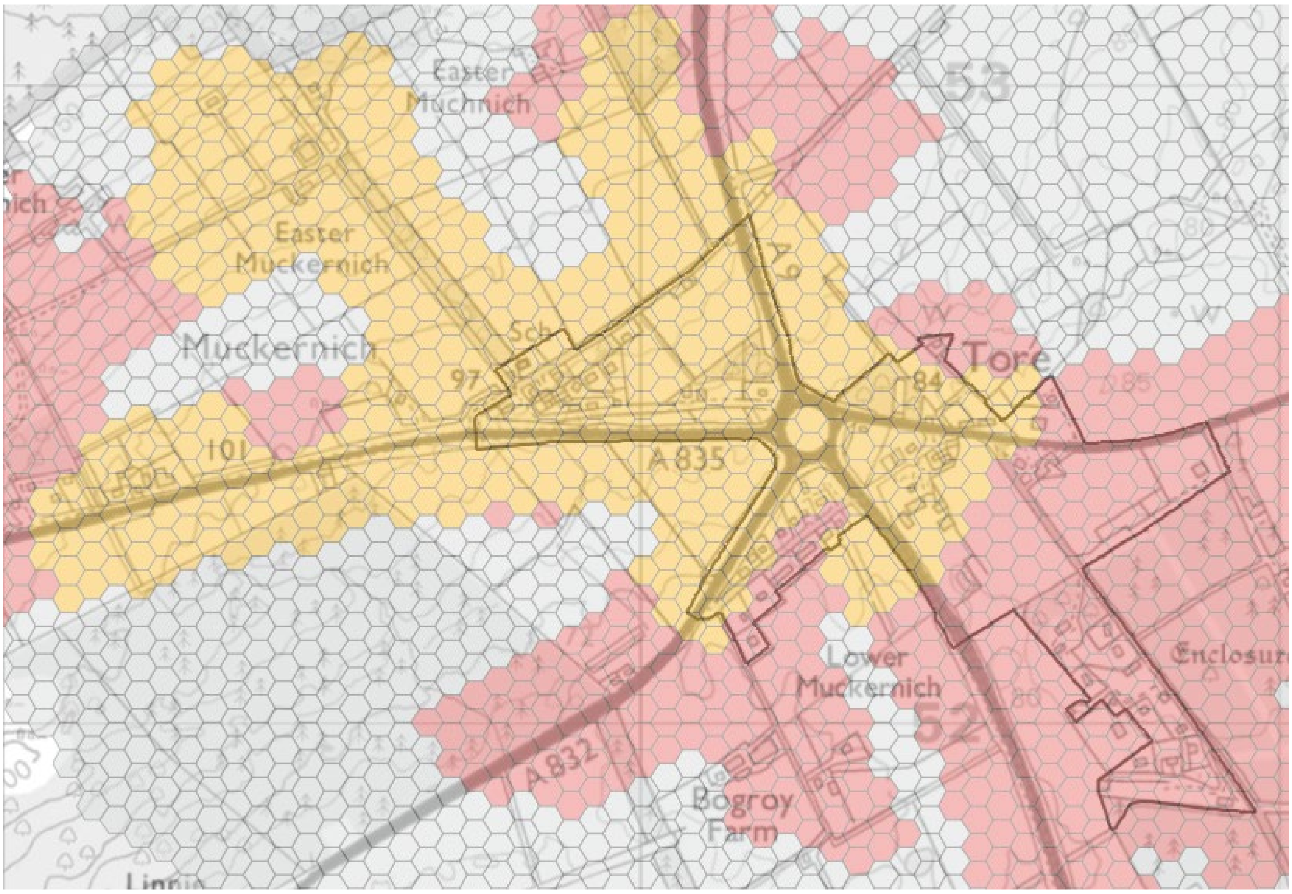


Munlochy

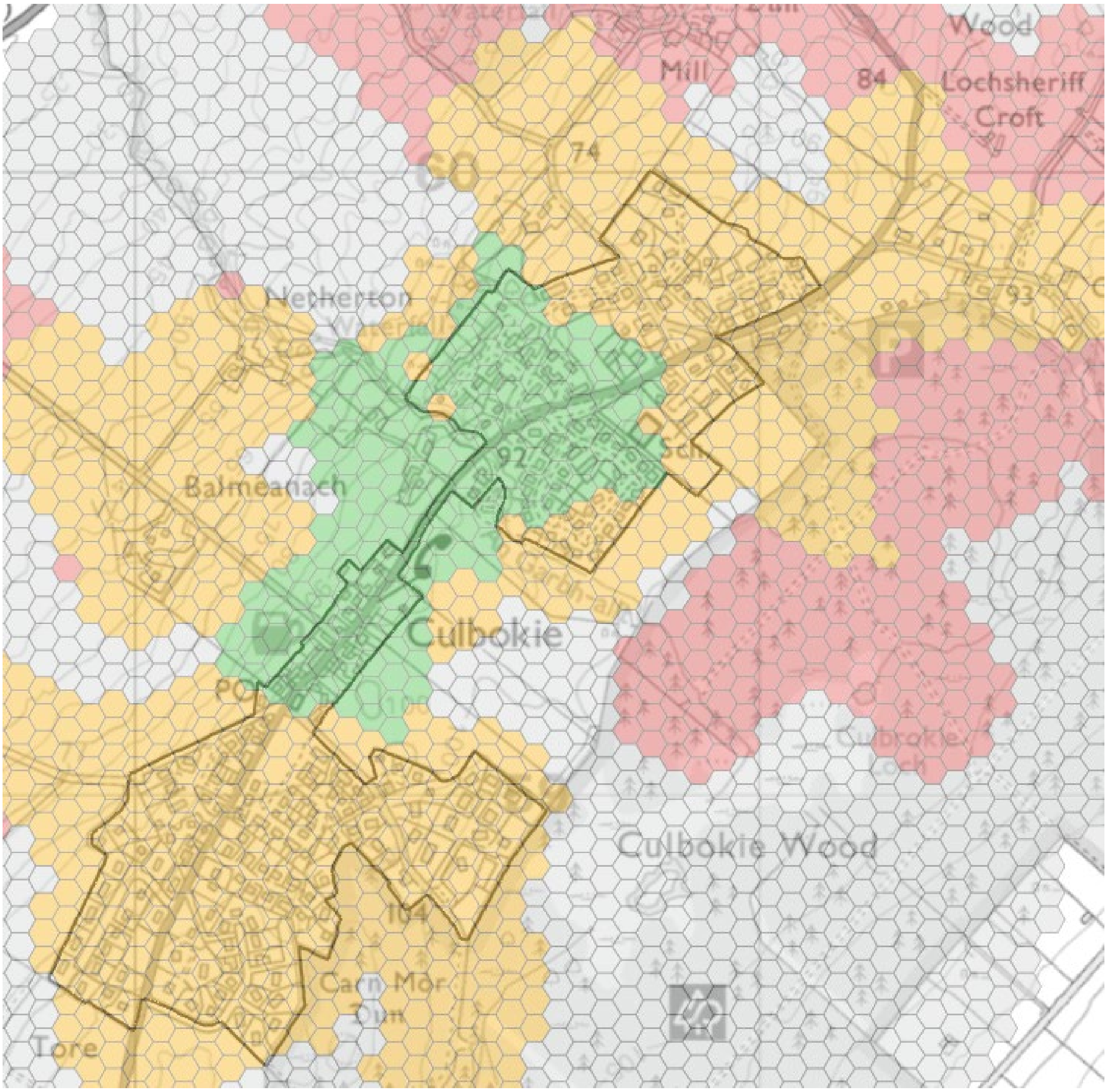

Pheasant Wood
A832
Well
Bridge
FB
Hirdie Wood
Resr
41
Brae of Munlochy
29
NTL
38
14PO
Sch
Munlochy
Munlochy Mains
Braeval Wood

Black Isle Area Profile

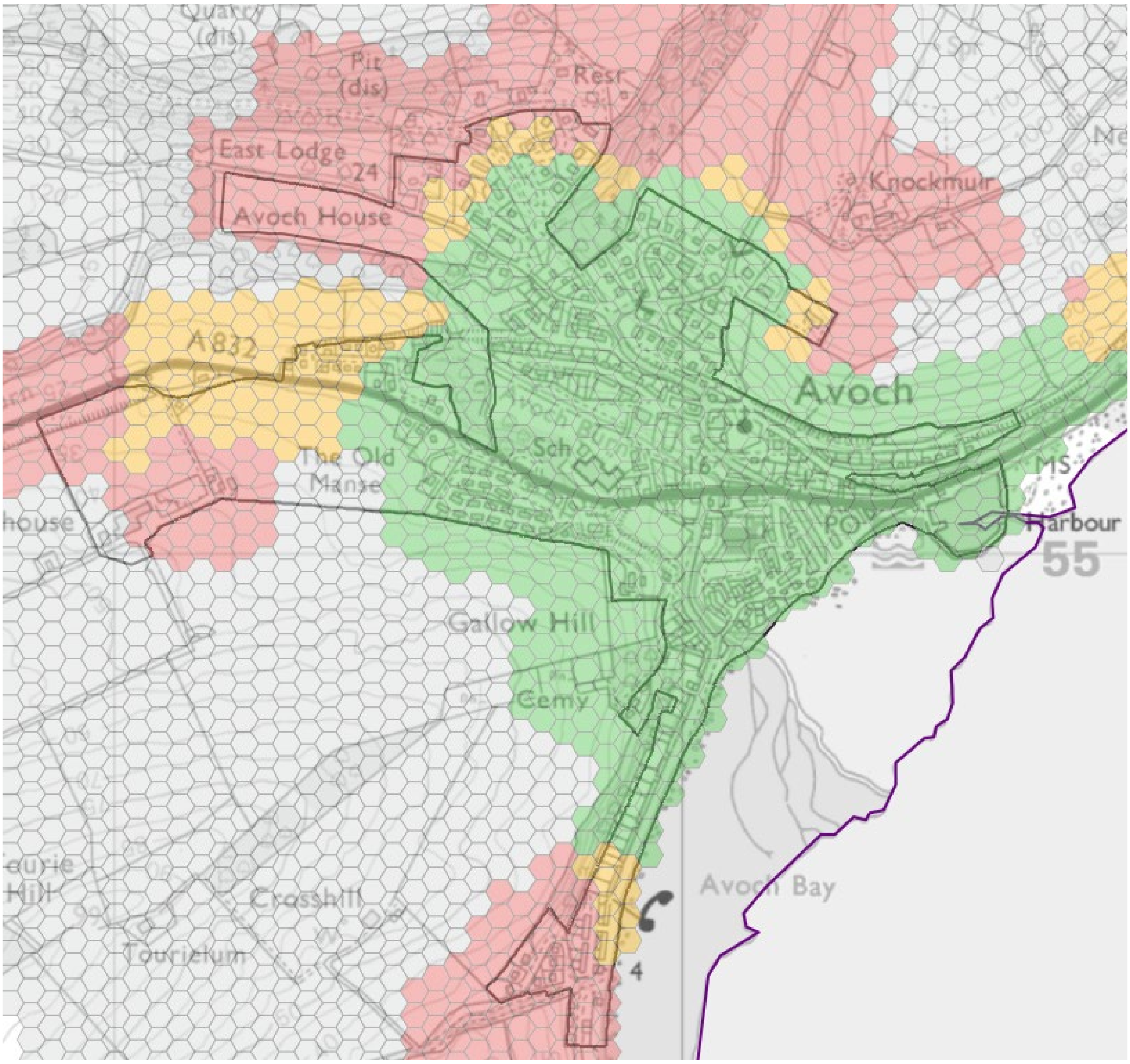
Tore



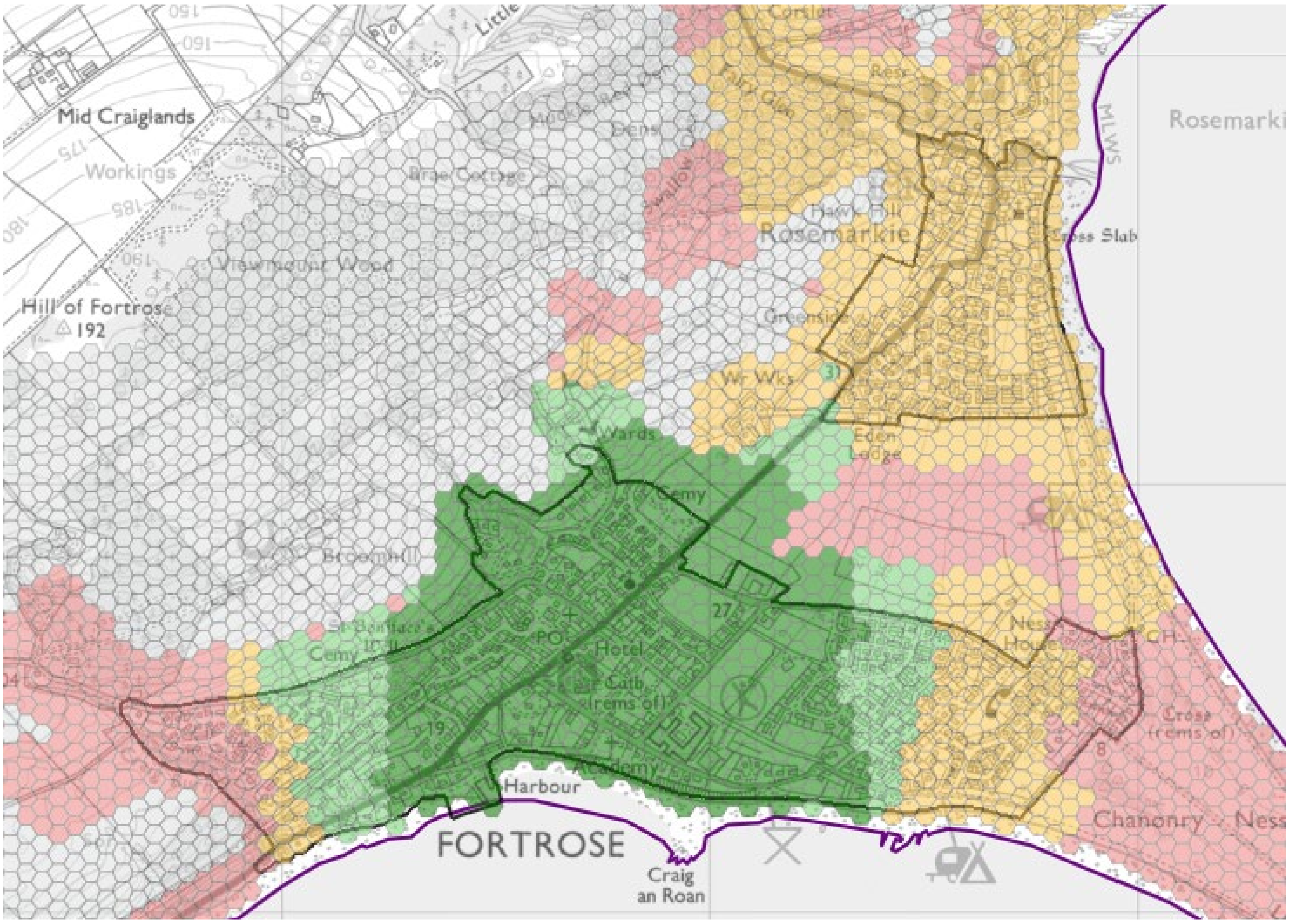
Culbokie


Wood
Mill
84
Lochsheriff
Croft
74
60
Netherton
93
92
Balmeanach
Culbokie
Culbokie Loch
Culbokie Wood
104
Carn Mor
Dun
Tore

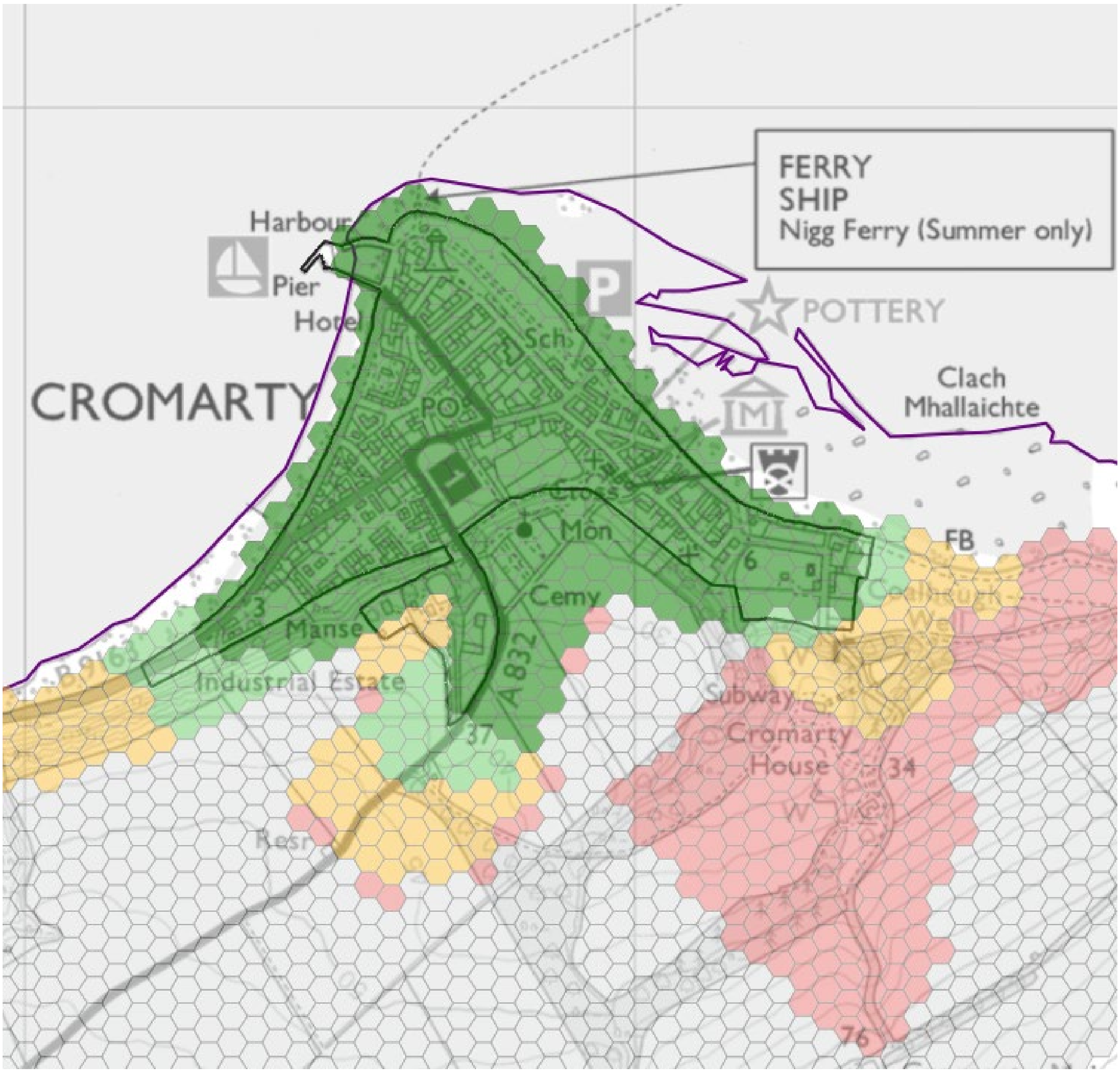
Avoch


Quarry (dis)
Pit (dis)
Resr
East Lodge
24
Avoch House
Knockmuir
A832
Avoch
Sch
The Old Manse
16
PO
Harbour
55
Gallow Hill
Cemy
Crosshill
Tourielum
Avoch Bay
4

Fortrose/Rosemarkie

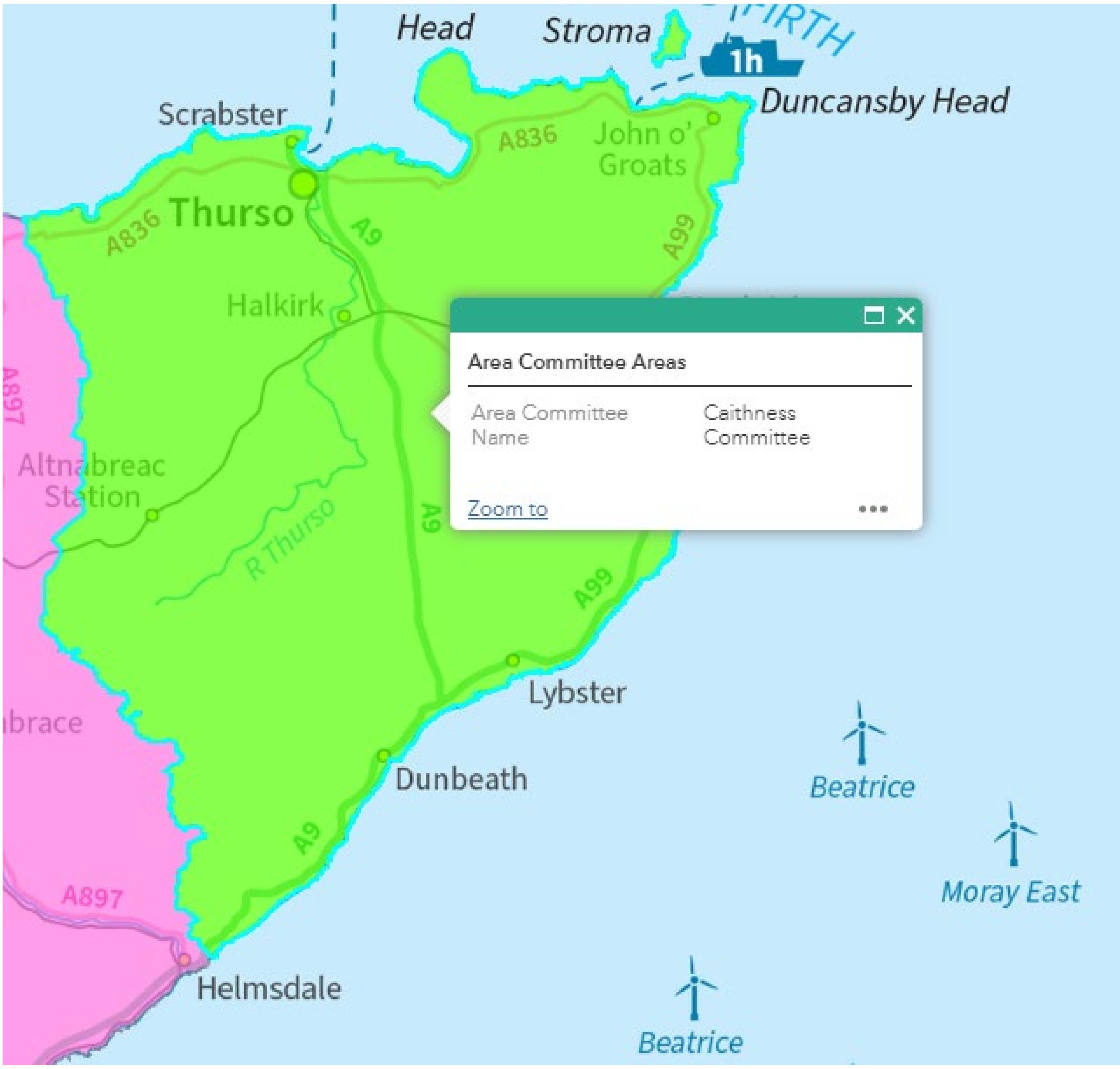


Cromarty


FERRY
SHIP
Nigg Ferry (Summer only)
Harbour
Pier
Hotel
CROMARTY
POTTERY
Sch
PO
Clach
Mhallaichte
Mon
Cemy
FB
Manse
Industrial Estate
A 832
Subway
Cromarty
House
Resr
37
34
76

Caithness Area Profile

1 Caithness Area Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements as defined within the Caithness & Sutherland Local Development Plan are Thurso, Wick, Castletown, Halkirk and Lybster.

Caithness lies in the northern part of the Scottish mainland, it is divided from the Orkney Islands by the Pentland Firth, and from the county of Sutherland by a picturesque mountain range stretching from the celebrated headland of the Ord to Drumholistan on the north Atlantic. Caithness is remote in UK terms but connected through road, rail, sea and air both north and south and to offshore opportunities. Tourism supports an increasing share of the local economy stimulated by the North Coast 500 route and renowned destinations such as John O'Groats. Large parts of the local landscape are flat, farmed and exposed to climatic conditions that inhibit significant natural regeneration of woodland. Conversely, this climate has attracted many proposals for the generation, storage, use and transmission of renewable energy and associated employment. The local economy has other opportunities, for example, decommissioning of the former nuclear plant at Dounreay has seeded many supply chain opportunities; Rolls Royce, Subsea 7 and BT are among the global companies investing in employment in the far north of Scotland.

Key factual information is set out in Section 4 below.

3 How well does the Area function?

Caithness fares better than other remote areas because it has a strategic location enroute to the Northern Isles and close to offshore opportunities. However, its lack of a critical mass population means that higher order services such as consultant and referral services healthcare are limited. Trunk and local road networks are lightly trafficked but maintenance issues are significant given the length and extent of the network and the resources available.

Car ownership is seen by many as essential because of the paucity, cost, duration of journey, and unreliability of public transport alternatives. Disappointingly, the need to travel has been magnified by sporadic housing in the countryside development by those not willing or able to find suitable accommodation within the main settlements. Locating additional facilities and services within the major centres of Wick and Thurso could help reverse this trend so that a higher proportion of people’s daily needs could be within a shorter more sustainable journey.

Diversifying the economy is a key challenge especially when there is a tension between the tourism and renewable energy sectors. For example, assets such as the Flow Country world heritage site should attract more visitors but more onshore renewable energy development may compromise that draw.

4 "Infrastructure First" Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within Caithness there are 15,067 premises 2,653 (18%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 5,889 (39%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 6,525 (43%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities** – there are no current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints at any Caithness school except Wick High which is forecast to breach in 5 years' time – full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024.
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** - spare water capacity at sub regional works but sewerage capacity issues at smaller sewage works at Dunnet and Halkirk. Water and sewerage network limitations at Wick, Dunnet and Halkirk.
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments** – vehicle numbers and congestion isn't a year-round capacity issue. However, road safety and maintenance issues predominate with limited investment targeted to address these matters.
- **Health Facility Capacity** – Caithness General Hospital was operating at greater than 90% occupancy in the 2022-2023 year – the number of registered patients per GP is above the Highland average of 770 patients at the following practices: Thurso & Halkirk (Thurso), Castletown, Pearson Practice (Wick) and Three Harbours (Thurso). However,

Caithness Area Profile

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 25,210 (10.7% of Highland population).
- **Population Change** - (Census 2011-2022) -4.8% (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%) with greatest fall in Thurso and Northwest Caithness Ward.
- **Age profile** (Census 2022) 0-16 (16.9%) 65+ (24.3%) (similar to Highland profile, but older than Scotland profile) – however falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023.
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** (Council Tax Data 2023) 89.3%.
- **Households** – (Census 2022) 6,074 occupied households.
- **House Completions** - long term average 63 per year which is 5.6% of Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e.
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Caithness has half (5%) the proportion of the Highland average (10%) proportion of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating and a higher (17%) proportion than Highland (13%) with the worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights pockets of poverty within north east Wick (Willowbank) and south east Wick (close to the distillery) – full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/
- **Visitors to Highland** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK – most (75%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – half stayed in serviced accommodation – hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities. According to Caithness & Sutherland Tourism Destination Recovery Strategy 2021-2024 report - significant portion of tourism and hospitality businesses in the region are short-staffed, with 64% of hotels facing shortages. In the Northern Highlands, 74% of tourism businesses, and 89% in the West Highlands, struggle to attract local workers, largely due to a lack of affordable staff accommodation, which 44% of employers identified as a key barrier.
- **Earnings and Employment** – (Thurso and Wick Travel to Work Areas 2023) – average gross weekly pay £714.60 (Thurso), £748.90 (Wick).
- **Working from Home & Commuting** – (Ward data from Census 2022) – around 29% of the workforce work mainly from home (slightly lower than Highland and Scotland averages) but around 41% commute more than 10km to work (higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- **Unemployment** – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active.
- **Employment sectors** – (2020 HIE data for the Caithness & Sutherland area) the top 3 employment sectors are: human health and social work (18.8%), wholesale and retail (12.5%) and accommodation and food services (15.6%). More local detail via Invest Caithness website).
- **Environmental and other constraints** - 57% of Caithness is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Local Place Plan details via
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
None to date

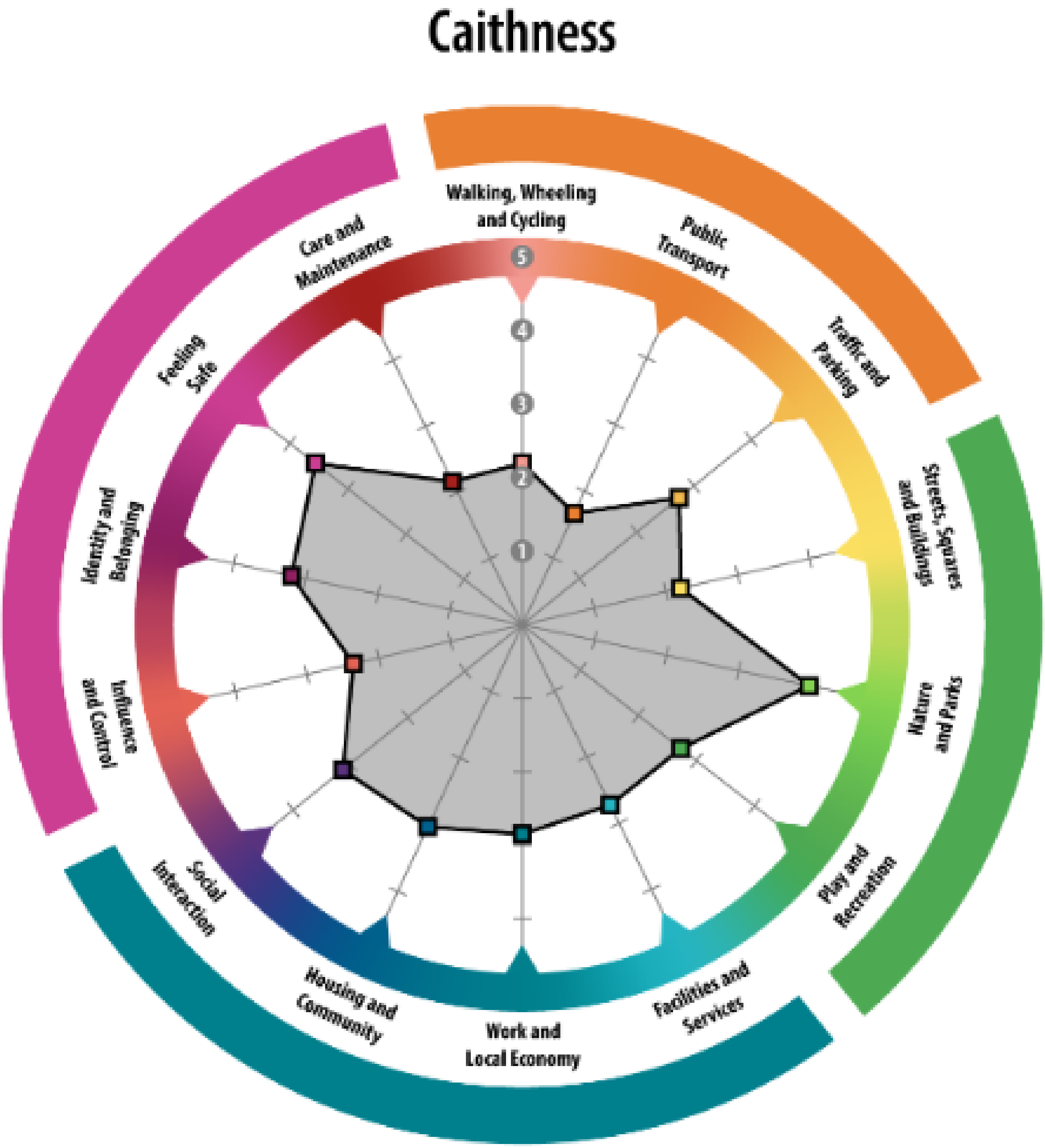
In Preparation
- Dunnet and Canisbay Local Place Plan
- Thurso Local Place Plan
- Helmsdale and District Local Place Plan (a small part of the Plan area lies within Caithness)

- Highland Council is leading the preparation of an Area Place Plan (APP), with a stakeholder group currently being formed to deliver the plan in draft by year end of 2024. The APP will collate and prioritise an overview of local priorities development, investment and service delivery across the County - identified through stakeholder and public engagement in addition to reviewing the content of existing plans and strategies across public and community partners. This includes consideration of priorities for the future of prominent Council assets as part of the Highland Investment Programme. The APP will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

Community Partnership Plan
Caithness Community Partnership (CCP) has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the Caithness area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive CCP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area. The information can accessed through -
https://highlandcpp.org.uk/community-partnerships/caithness-community partnership/#:~:text=About%20Caithness%20Community%20Partnership&text=By%20working%20together%20to%20identify,of%20residents%20across%20the%20area
The Partnership program's key priorities are mental health and wellbeing, poverty, and employability. Additional themes include addressing inequalities, repopulation, transport, disabilities, and the goal of achieving net zero.

Caithness Area Profile

6 **Place Standard :** Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).



Caithness Average Score (2.7) is joint-lowest among sub-regional areas in Highland.

Area response rate: 148 online responses, plus 21 young people engaged in HLH facilitated sessions.

Domains for which Caithness scores low compared with rest of Highland:

- *Spaces* grouping (3.0) is lowest in Highland, within which:
    - *Streets, Squares & Buildings* (2.3) is lowest in Highland

- *Civic & Stewardship* grouping (2.8) is joint-lowest in Highland, within which:
  - *Care & Maintenance* score (2.2) is lowest in Highland
- *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.2) scored joint lowest in Highland.

Facilities & Services (2.7) scored among the lowest in Highland: *See summary of qualitative feedback on this domain, below.*

Domains for which Caithness compares well with rest of Highland:

- *Housing & Community* (3.0) is joint-highest in Highland.
- *Traffic & Parking* (2.7) among the highest in Highland.

Highest scores for area: *Nature & Parks* (4.0); *Feeling Safe* (3.6)
Lowest scores for area: *Public Transport* (1.7); *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.2)

Qualitative Feedback

- Affordable housing is generally seen to be available, with options meeting various needs. However, some raise concerns over the availability and increasing cost of long-term rentals and need for social housing targeted at young families and older residents, in particular. General frustration over poor maintenance and dampness of council properties in some areas.
- Regard for the valuable role of volunteers in maintaining the upkeep of public areas. However, there are frequent calls for improved upkeep and improvement of playparks as well as increased availability of indoor spaces for young people during winter months.
- Significant concerns about the condition of roads and pavements, with frequent mention of potholes, uneven surfaces (particular issue for wheelchair users) and lack of safe, well-connected cycling paths.
- Desire for better signage to manage tourist traffic and responsible parking.
- Limited and infrequent public transport services, particularly in rural areas, hinder access to work, school and essential services. This is exacerbated by perceived high costs, poor integration of timetables and unreliability of services, which discourage usage.
- Complaints about poor internet and mobile service in certain areas, with suggestions for upgrading digital infrastructure to improve connectivity.
- Calls for more local decision making powers, including regard to the role of community groups in expressing local views. This view partly reflects local tensions over Caithness' significant contribution to renewable energy production, which is appreciated by many residents, alongside parallel concerns over impacts of associated infrastructure on the natural landscape and parallel need for wider improvements to local infrastructure, including flood defences, drainage, and sustainable public transport.

Qualitative Feedback in relation to Facilities & Services:

- **Education Infrastructure and Maintenance**: Numerous comments highlight the poor condition of schools, particularly Thurso High School, and the need for investment in new, safer, and more modern school buildings. Despite some criticism, many comments highlight the presence of good schools, including recently built facilities (Wick), as a positive.
- **Maintenance**: Issues with the maintenance of public infrastructure, such as roads and buildings, with suggestions for better upkeep and renovation to prevent further decline.
- **Health Services Accessibility**: There is a significant concern about the lack of local health services, particularly NHS dental care, general practitioners, and specialist services. Travel times to hospital can be a concern, particularly specialist services, which often require long trips to Inverness.
- **Retail and Local Economy**: The decline of local shops and high streets, with calls for lower business rates, more support for small businesses, and a broader range of shops, particularly clothing and DIY stores. High vacancy rates in town centres and centralisation of retail out of town are highlighted as a concern.
- **Tourism and Town Aesthetics**: Concerns about the appearance of town centres, with suggestions to improve signage, renovate vacant buildings, and provide better support for tourism services.
- **Community Spaces and Facilities**: There is widespread appreciation for library services across Caithness. Many highlight demand for more accessible community spaces, such as sports facilities, libraries, and community halls, with some comments pointing to the need for new or better-used spaces and longer weekend opening hours to improve uptake.
- **Public Services Funding**: Widespread concern about funding cuts affecting public services, especially libraries, schools, and healthcare, with calls for increased investment.
- **Public Transport and Accessibility**: Issues with public transport, including limited bus services and poor connections to facilities (including within towns), as well as the accessibility of buildings and services for people with disabilities. Although Thurso and Wick well served for facilities, including services from libraries, some respondents find these facilities are not easily accessible by foot, and depend upon car use (e.g. library, gym, pool).

Concerns arising for Children & Young People:

- Improving Access to Youth Facilities: transport and parking to make youth and leisure facilities more accessible.
- Call for More Youth Facilities: such as skateparks, climbing walls, and indoor sports facilities that are open for longer hours (limited weekend hours). Comments suggest concerns over limited availability of public swimming, when facilities are booked out by schools.
- Youth Job Opportunities: need for investment in young people and job opportunities in Wick.
- Concerns over the number of vacant premises in Wick.

7 Local Living Outcomes

In **Caithness**, we surveyed **42197 Hex Cells** - 11553 fall within or around SDA or growing Settlements of these - **3280** Cells contain the **9695** Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells).

Within these Residential Cells:

- **82.9% of residential properties** are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable** (**4539**) or **Highly Walkable** (**3501**)
- **2.3% of residential properties (229)** have **Few or No Walkable services.**

The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in Caithness Area Committee Area is **11.0** (out of a **maximum possible of 16**).

The highest scoring residential cells are in **WICK** in the area shown and **score 16 out of the maximum of 16**.

Castletown, Thurso/Scrabster and Wick SDAs all have the highest average residential score (at **11.4 per property**) **Latheronwheel Growing Settlement** has the lowest average residential property score with an **average of 5.0**.

<u>Wick Summary</u>

In the **Wick SDA** we surveyed **3887** Hex Cells of these - **1059** Cells contain the **3591** Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells). **Within these Residential Cells:**

- **87.1% of residential properties** are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (1933)** or **Highly Walkable (1193)**
- **4.7% of residential properties (171)** have **Few or No Walkable services**

The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in Wick SDS area is **11.4** (out of a maximum possible of 16). The highest scoring residential cells are in the area shown and score 16 **out of the maximum of 16. This score covers** 51 **residential properties.**

<u>Thurso Summary</u>

In the **Thurso/Scrabster SDA** we surveyed **3492** Hex Cells of these - **1242** Cells contain the **4085** Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells:

- **86.1% of residential properties** are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (49.8% or 2033 Residential properties)** or **Highly Walkable (36.3% or 1484 Residential properties)**
- **0.3% of residential properties (13)** have **Few or No Walkable services**

Caithness Area Profile

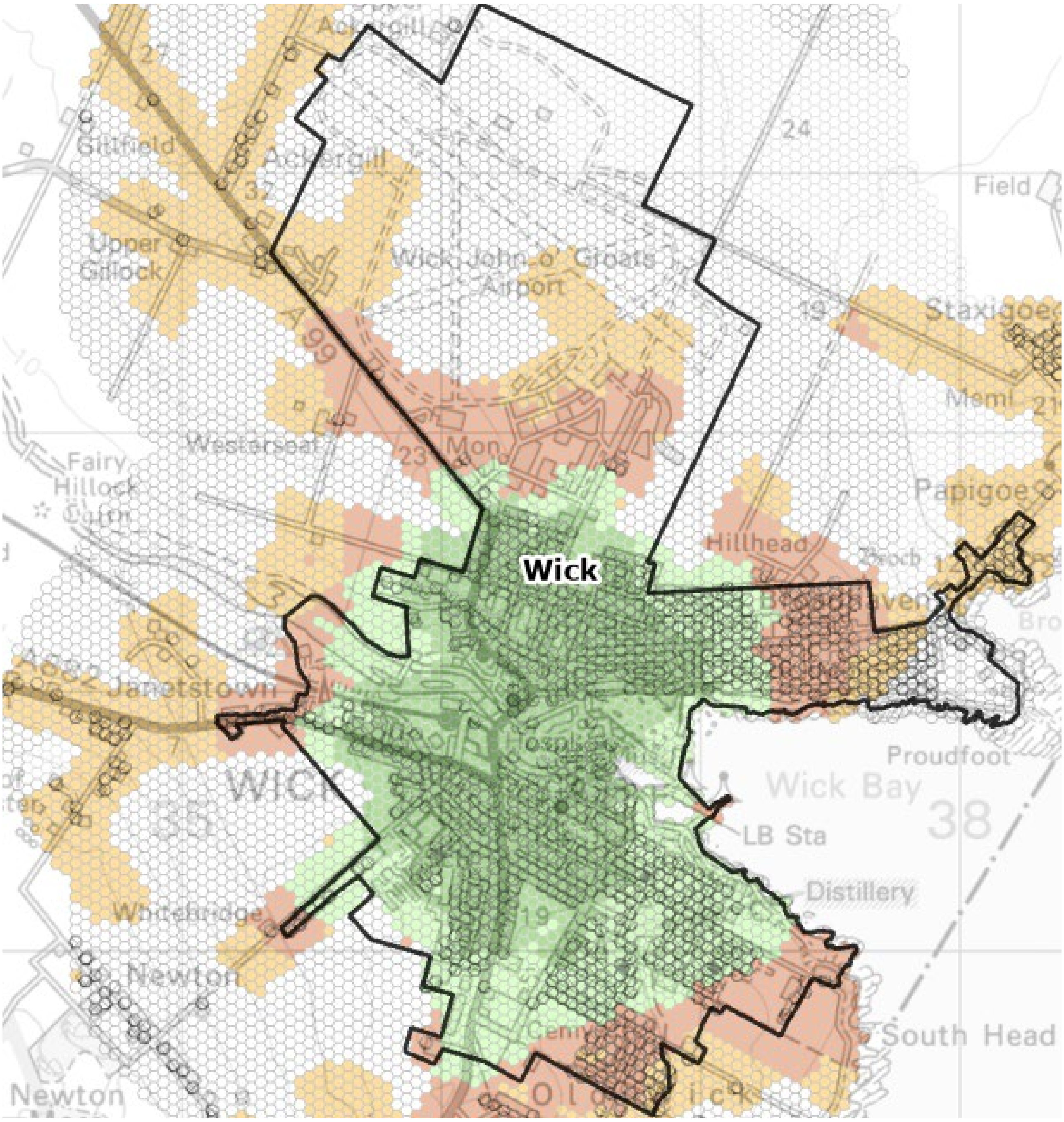
The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in **Thurso/Scrabster SDA** is **11.41%** (out of a maximum possible of 16). The highest scoring residential cells are in the area shown and score **15.6** (out of a maximum possible of 16). This score covers **196** residential properties.

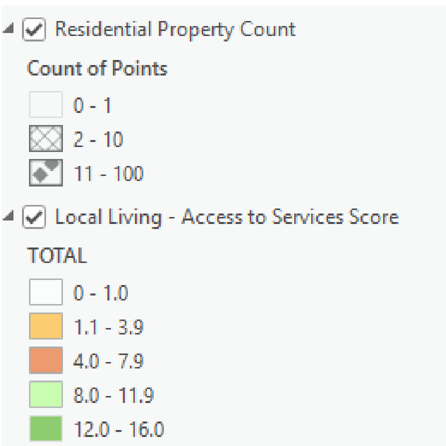
		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties						Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Name	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Tota	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
SDA	Castletown	789	170	445	5084.8	11.4	12.8	2.62	228	204	8	5	0	445	51.2%	45.8%	1.8%	1.1%	0.0%
GS	Dunbeath	282	59	108	1012.0	9.4	12	1.83	17	59	32	0	0	108	15.7%	54.6%	29.6%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Dunnet	166	43	72	441.2	6.1	6.4	1.67	0	0	72	0	0	72	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Halkirk	676	268	534	5368.2	10.1	12	1.99	274	179	43	37	1	534	51.3%	33.5%	8.1%	6.9%	0.2%
GS	John O'Groats	1103	72	118	869.4	7.4	8.2	1.64	0	18	100	0	0	118	0.0%	15.3%	84.7%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Keiss	141	57	134	1030.2	7.7	7.8	2.35	0	0	134	0	0	134	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Latheronwheel	114	33	55	275.0	5.0	5	1.67	0	0	55	0	0	55	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Lybster	337	115	265	2903.2	11.0	12	2.30	54	208	1	1	1	265	20.4%	78.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
GS	Reay	368	88	135	763.0	5.7	8	1.53	0	3	132	0	0	135	0.0%	2.2%	97.8%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Thurso/Scrabster	3491	1242	4085	46598.0	11.4	15.6	3.29	2033	1484	555	13	0	4085	49.8%	36.3%	13.6%	0.3%	0.0%
GS	Watten	199	74	153	1464.8	9.6	9.6	2.07	0	153	0	0	0	153	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Wick	3887	1059	3591	40832.8	11.4	16	3.39	1933	1193	294	130	41	3591	53.8%	33.2%	8.2%	3.6%	1.1%
	Grand Total	**11553**	**3280**	**9695**	**106642.6**	**11.0**	**16**	**2.96**	**4539**	**3501**	**1426**	**186**	**43**	**9695**	**46.8%**	**36.1%**	**14.7%**	**1.9%**	**0.4%**

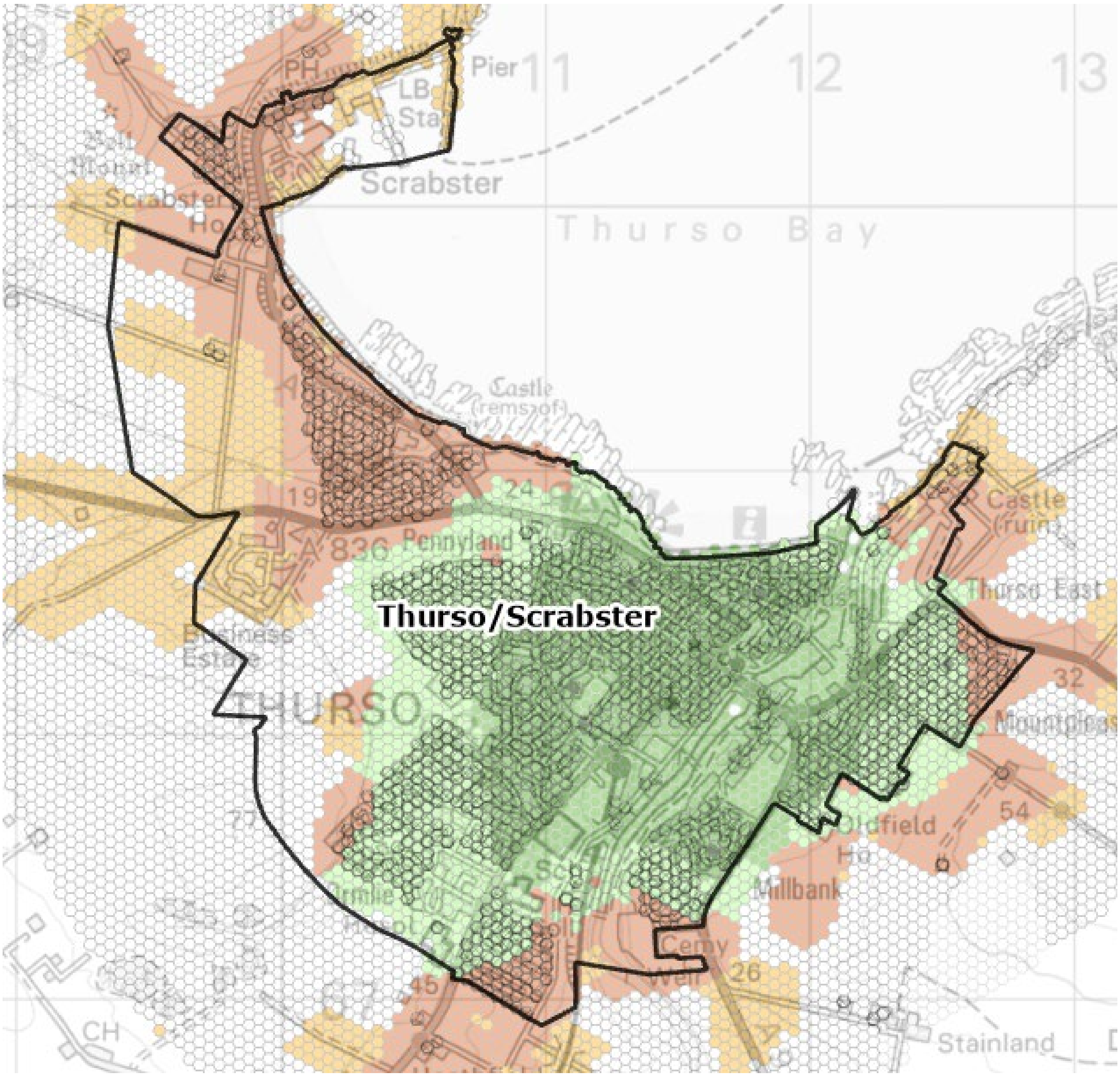
Full details via [Local Living Mapping (arcgis.com)]

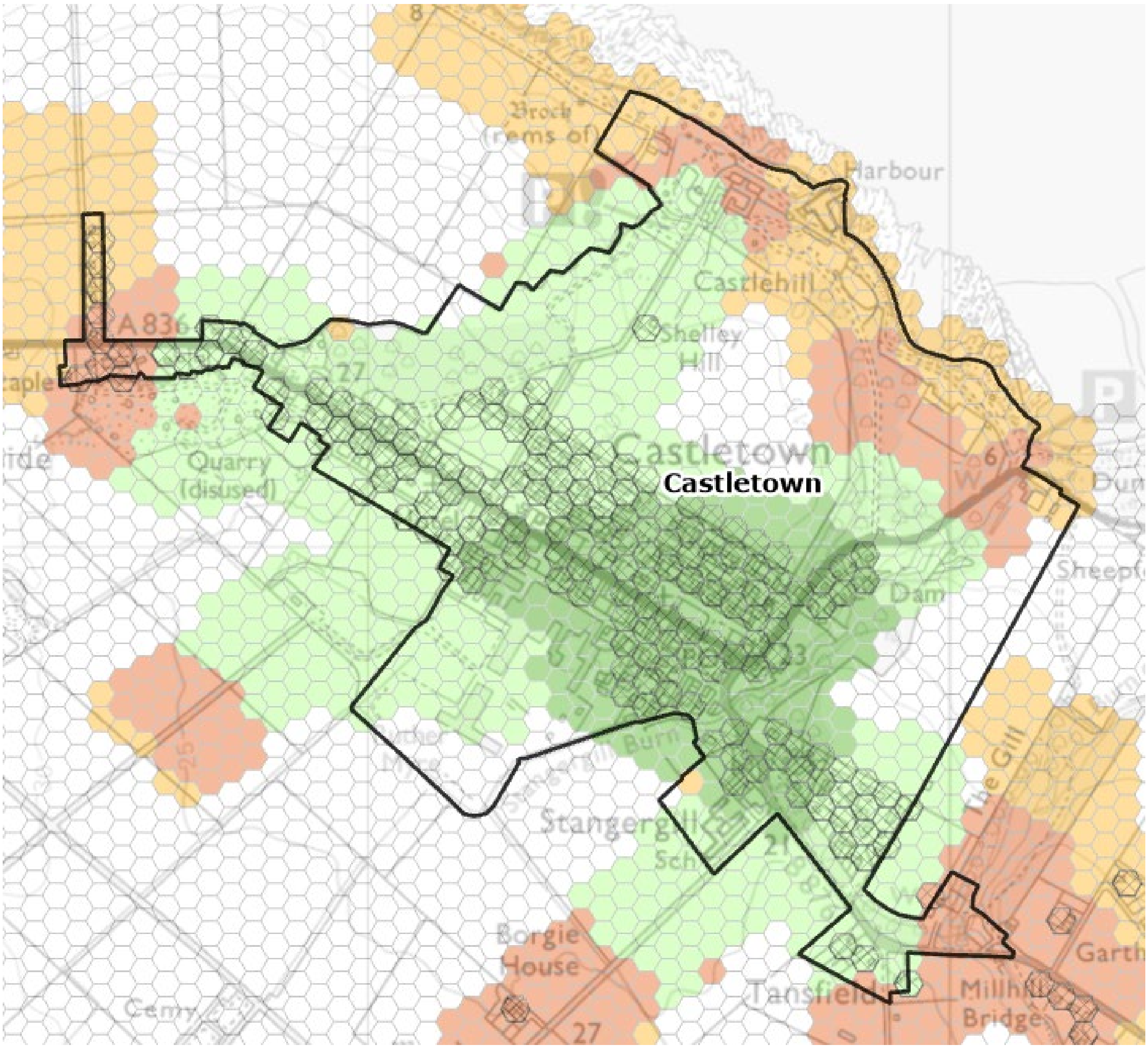
Caithness Area Profile

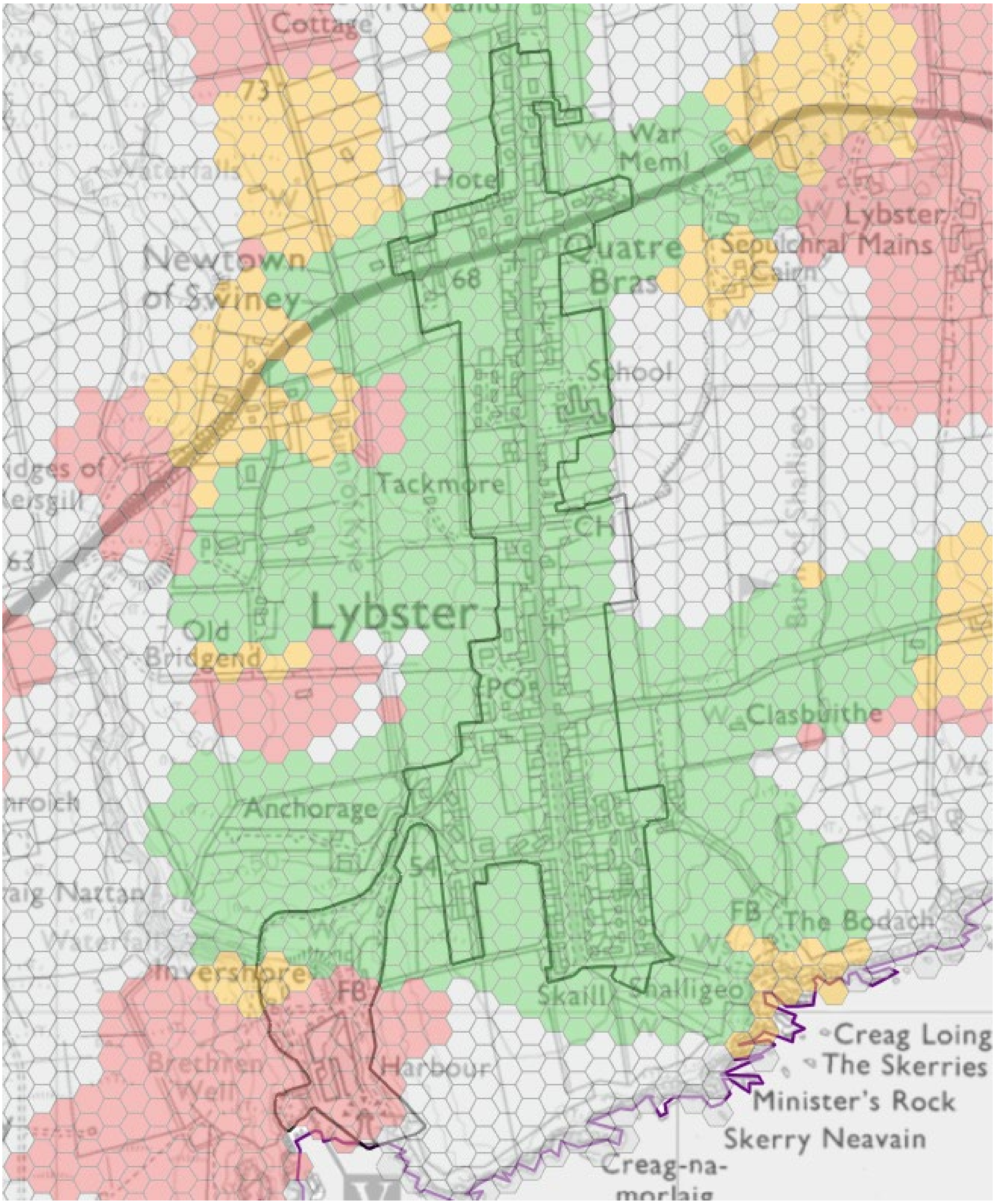
Appendix – Local Living Outcomes Maps for Main Settlements



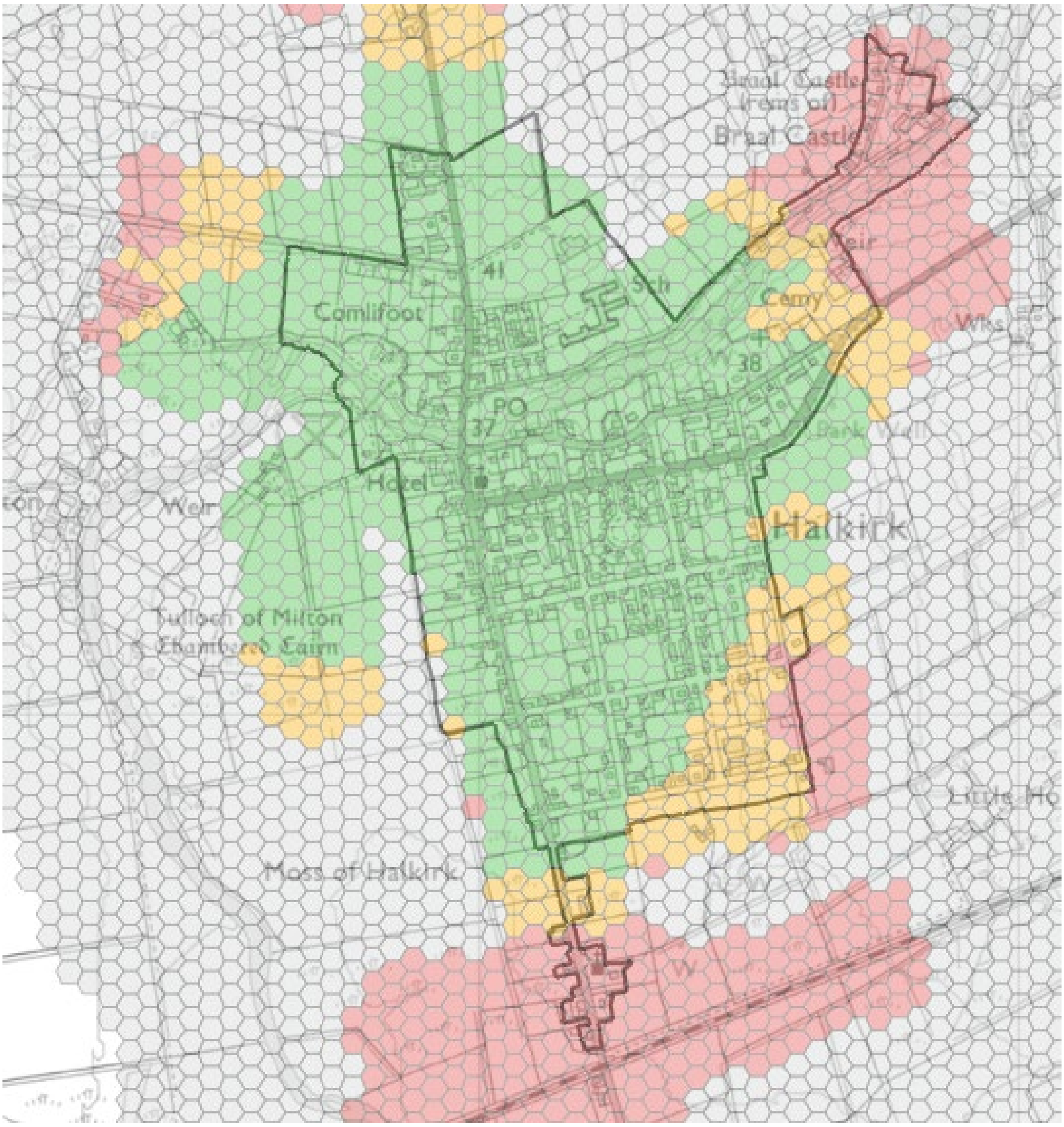



Thurso/Scrabster
Scrabster
Thurso Bay
Pier
THURSO
Castle
Thurso East
Oldfield
Millbank
Stainland
Pennyland
A836


Castletown
Harbour
Castlehill
Shelley Hill
Quarry (disused)
Dam
Stangergill
Borgie House
Tansfield
Millhill Bridge
The Gill
Garth
Sheep
A 836

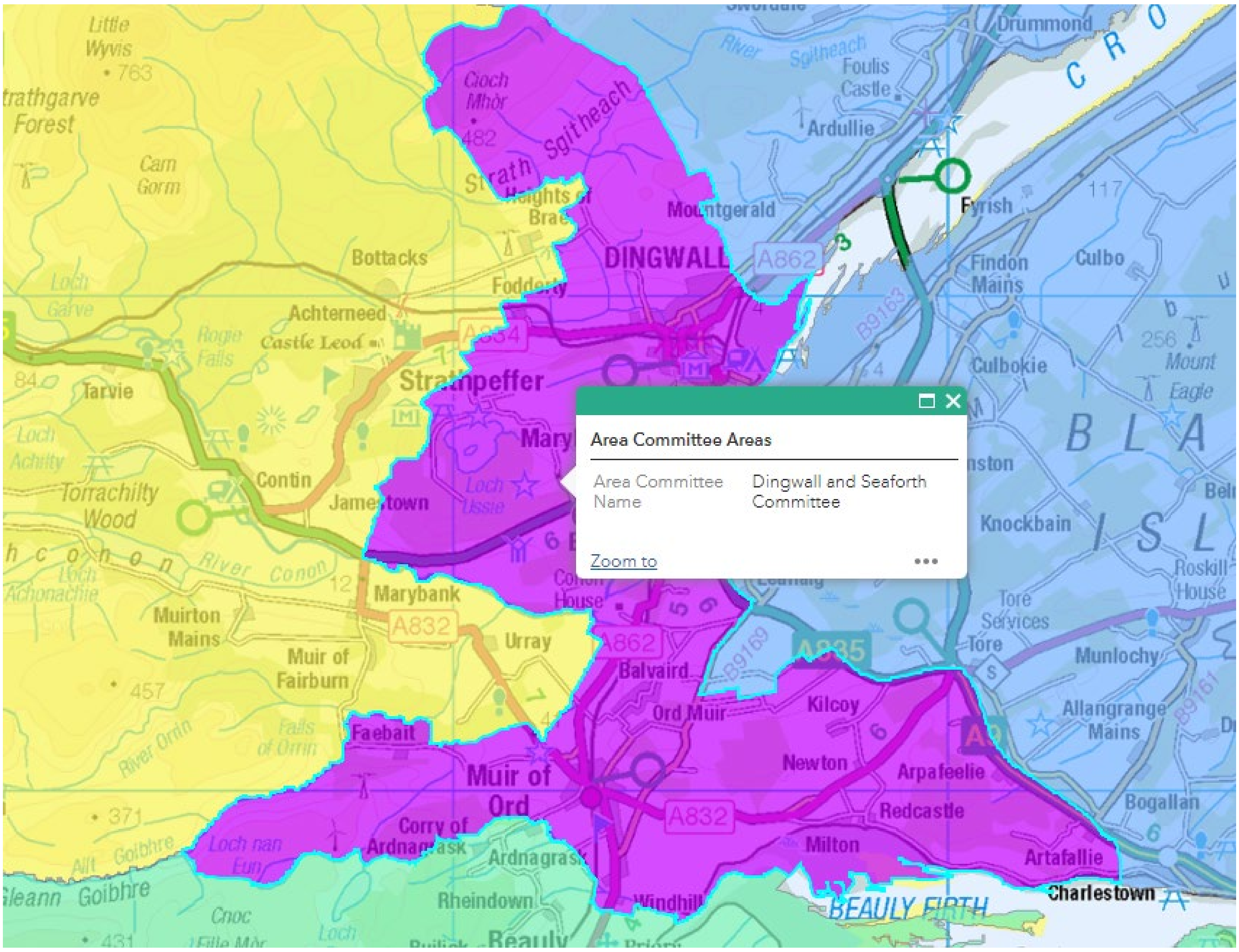

Cottage
73
Hotel
War Meml
Lybster
Sepulchral Mains
Cairn
Newtown of Swiney
68
Quatre Bras
School
Tackmore
CH
Lybster
Old Bridgend
PO
Clasbuithe
Anchorage
54
The Bodach
FB
Invershore
FB
Skaill
Shalligeo
Brethren Well
Harbour
Creag Loing
The Skerries
Minister's Rock
Skerry Neavain
Creag-na-

Caithness Area Profile



Dingwall and Seaforth Area Profile

1 Dingwall & Seaforth Area Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements are (main settlements defined within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 in order of sustainability) Dingwall, Muir of Ord, Conon Bridge, North Kessock, Maryburgh, and Tore.

The Dingwall and Seaforth Area covers most of Mid Ross and accommodates most of its population. Dingwall as the county town is the pre-eminent place in terms of administration, employment and higher order facilities. The area has very good road and rail transport connections compared to the rest of Highland and fewer physical and environmental constraints to development than other areas. The landscape is principally rolling farmland often with attractive coastal views across the Cromarty and Beauly Firths. Settlement is concentrated in a series of small towns or large villages most of which are strung along the old A9 route and railway line. Fluvial and coastal flood risk and gradient issues constrain the development of Dingwall and therefore other settlements notably Muir of Ord and Conon Bridge may accommodate a greater share of future growth.

Key factual information is set out in Section 4 below.

3 How well does the Area function?

The Area functions well compared to other parts of Highland. It is close enough and well connected enough to the City of Inverness to take advantage of its higher order facilities and employment opportunities but sufficiently separate not to be affected too much by the "overheating" effects of rapid growth such as traffic congestion and overburdened medical and school facilities.

Challenges do exist, notably in terms of addressing flooding issues in Dingwall, controlling sporadic housing in the countryside development, which has adverse landscape and service provision cost impacts, and making sure that the main towns and villages don't become dormitory communities for Inverness jobs. Revitalising the town and village centres with community hub facilities and the settlements with employment opportunities is likely way forward. The Area is well placed to take advantage of the job spin offs from the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport project and land is already safeguarded for employment use at Muir of Ord, Maryburgh and Dingwall.

The Highland Investment Plan is looking to review and improve how essential services and facilities are provided in Dingwall. The evidence set out in this paper, along with the emerging Area Place Plan that is being developed, will be considered through that work that will be subject to consultation before the Proposed Plan is prepared. Stakeholders are encouraged to input to that separate process as is it will inform the strategy and land use planning priorities for the new plan for Dingwall.

4 “Infrastructure First” Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within Dingwall & Seaforth there are 6,962 premises 796 (11%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 2,782 (40%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 3,384 (49%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities -** current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints at Ben Wyvis Primary and Tarradale Primary – full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024.
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** - spare water capacity at sub-regional Loch Glass water source and works and at most main settlement sewage works but potential network capacity issues at Conon Bridge, Dingwall, Maryburgh, Muir of Ord and North Kessock. However, no spare capacity at Dingwall and Tore sewage facilities.
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments** – peak time road congestion within Dingwall worsened by capacity of rail level crossings and side junctions – local safety concerns about Conon Bridge A835 junction and Muir of Ord village centre junctions - elsewhere, road safety and maintenance issues predominate with more limited investment available to address these matters.
- **Health Facility Capacity** – during 2022/23 the Ross Memorial Hospital in Dingwall had a lower percentage bed occupancy than other Highland hospitals and a 100% record of seeing A&E patients within 4 hours - GP practice provision is concentrated at Muir of Ord (branch surgery from Beauly) and Dingwall – the provision in Dingwall has a patients per GP ratio of over the Highland average of 770 and the Beauly based provision below that Highland average.

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 13,029 (5.5% of Highland population).
- **Population Change** - (Census 2011-2022) + 6.9% higher than Scotland and Highland growth (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%).
- **Age profile** (Census 2022) 0-16 (18.2%) 65+ (22.5%) (higher proportion of young and old than Highland and Scotland profile) – however falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023.
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** (Council Tax Data 2023) 89.3%.
- **Households** – (Census 2022) 6,074 occupied households.
- **House Completions** - long term average 65 per year which is 6% of Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e.
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Area has higher (11%) proportion than Highland (10%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating and lower (8%) proportion than Highland (13%) with worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights extremes within Dingwall and to a lesser degree Conon Bridge with poverty most pronounced within central Dingwall - full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/.
- **Visitors to Highland** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK – most (75%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – half stayed in serviced accommodation – hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities.
- **Employment** – (Inverness Travel to Work Area 2023) – 35,000 full time employees (almost half of Highland jobs), gross average weekly pay £744.80 – productivity (GVA/filled job) £53,700 compared to UK average of £57,721.
- **Working from Home & Commuting** – (Ward data from Census 2022) – 28.3% of the workforce work mainly from home (lower than Highland and Scotland averages) but 48.5% commute more than 10km to work (much higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- **Unemployment** – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active.
- **Employment sectors** – (2020 HIE data for Inner Moray Firth area) the top 3 employment sectors within the Inner Moray Firth area are: human health and social work (19.8%), wholesale and retail (14.8%) and accommodation and food services (11.1%).
- **Environmental and other constraints** - 47% of the Dingwall & Seaforth area is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Local Place Plan details available at:
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
The Black Isle Local Place Plan has been prepared, approved by the Area Committee and has been cleared for registration. It covers a very small part of the area.

In Preparation
Highland Council is leading the preparation of an Area Place Plan (APP) under the guidance of a steering group of public and third sector stakeholders, working towards delivery the plan in draft by November 2024. The APP will collate and prioritise an overview of local priorities development, investment and service delivery across the Dingwall & Seaforth area - identified through stakeholder and public engagement in addition to reviewing the content of existing plans and strategies across public and community partners. This includes consideration of priorities for the future of prominent Council assets as part of the Highland Investment Programme. The APP will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

Community Partnership Plan
Mid-Ross Community Partnership has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive, the CP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area.

Dingwall Locality Plan 2019 via https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Dingwall-Locality-Plan-2019.docx

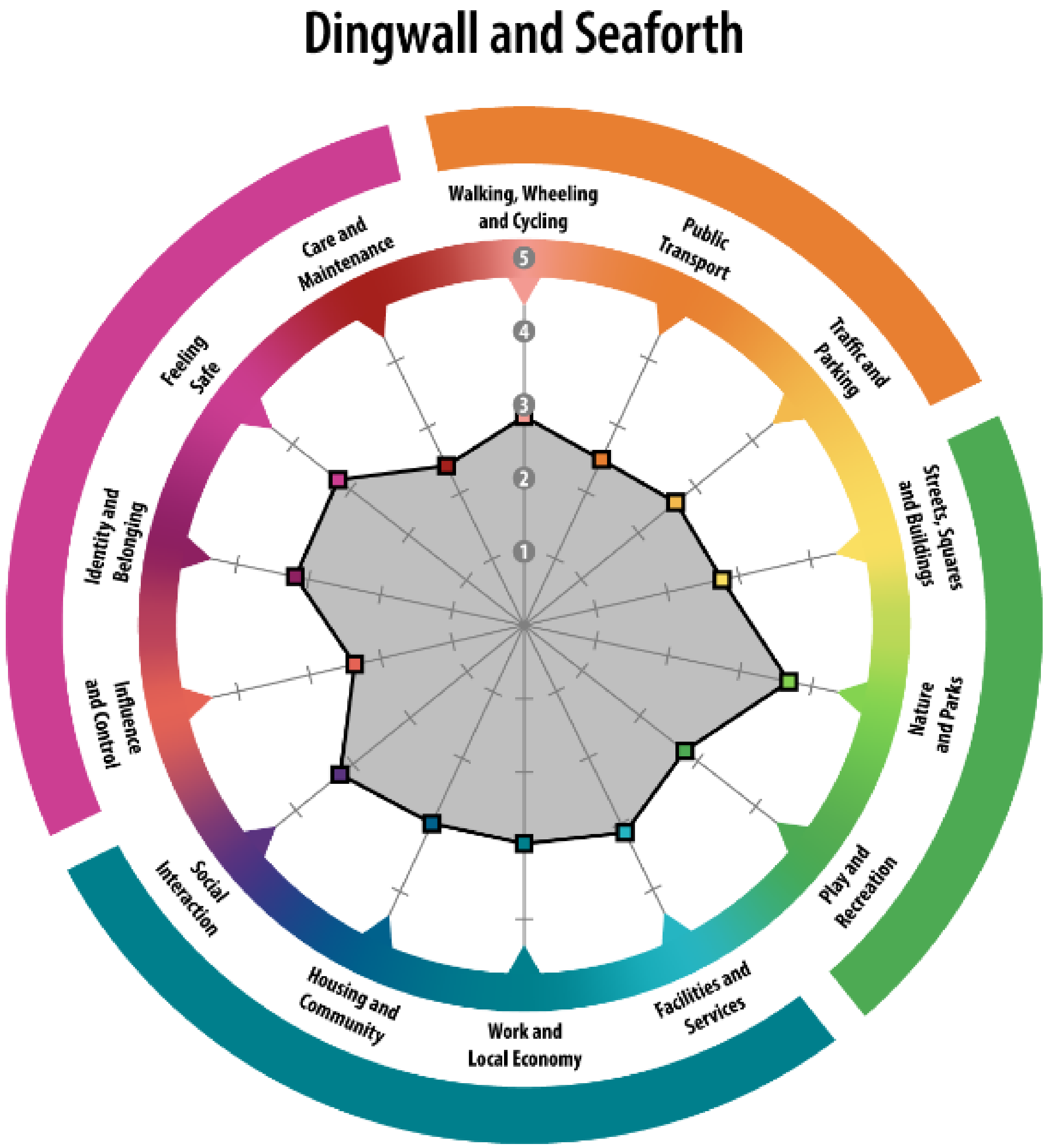
- Key land use related objectives – develop more local accessible services and facilities and improve transport to more remote services, change use of Town Hall to community hub, improve local recreational facilities.

Conon Bridge Locality Plan via https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Connon-Bridge-Locality-Plan-1.xlsm

- Key land use related objectives – develop more local accessible services and facilities, improve local recreational facilities, Men Shed.

Dingwall and Seaforth Area Profile

6 **Place Standard :** Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).



Dingwall & Seaforth Area Average Score (2.9) is equivalent to the Highland average score.

Response rate for the Place Standard Survey: 61 (relatively low), plus 19 young people engaged in HLH facilitated sessions.

Highest scores for area: *Nature & Parks* (3.7); *Feeling Safe* (3.3); *Facilities & Services* (3.2)
Lowest scores for area: *Care & Maintenance* (2.4); *Feeling Listened To* (2.4); *Public Transport* (2.5)

Dingwall and Seaforth Area Profile

Domains for which D&S compares well with rest of Highland:

- *Housing & Community (3.0)* scored joint-highest in Highland.
- *Facilities & Services* (3.2) scored second highest in Highland.
- *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.9) scored second highest in Highland.
- *Public Transport* (2.5) scored second highest in Highland.

Domains for which D&S scores low compared with rest of Highland:

- *Nature & Park*s (3.7) scored lowest in Highland.
- *Pride in Place* (3.2) scored lowest in Highland.
- *Care & Maintenance* (2.4) scored second lowest in Highland.
- *Feeling Safe* (3.3) scored second lowest in Highland.

Qualitative Feedback:

- High regard for opportunities for walking and cycling to amenities, alongside concerns about path surfaces causing issues for push-chairs, wheelchairs and those with poor mobility, lack of lighting on key paths, road safety due to speeding vehicles, and cycling connections beyond Dingwall.
- While the area benefits from rail and bus connections, there were common requests for improved connectivity between towns and improved punctuality and cleanliness of services, alongside better seating at bus shelters and improved accessibility for disabled users.
- Extensive free parking in Dingwall is greatly appreciated, although concerns were raised over insufficiency of disabled parking spaces.
- Issues are raised over general maintenance, including vacant and dilapidated buildings, roads and footpaths. Some call for turning vacant lots into mini parks for socialising.
- Pefferside park and the leisure centre are well used and appreciated as opportunities for exercise. However, comments call for more modern play equipment across the area, particularly for younger children.
- Access to employment out with local opportunities in retail, hospitality and education tends to promote commuting to Inverness by car.
- There is appreciation for a variety of social and affordable housing, but affordable housing is regarded as insufficient to meet needs of residents and key workers. There are concerns over the maintenance of existing housing stock.
- Calls for improved flood defences.

Qualitative Feedback specific to Facilities & Services:

<u>Positive Aspects:</u>

- Accessible Facilities: many respondents appreciate having local access to key services such as schools, library, and leisure facilities. They find the pricing reasonable (c.f. young people disagree) and mention that schools are well-equipped.
- Dingwall Academy & Library: frequently praised for their accessibility and integration with the community, seen as models for other services.
- Community Spaces: People highlight the presence of existing community centres, church halls, youth clubs, and the integrated library in Dingwall Academy as valuable resources, although some facilities require maintenance.

- Convenient Shopping: Several comments reflect the ease of access to shops like Tesco, Lidl, and local stores.
- Local Independent Businesses: independent shops are mentioned as contributing positively to the local economy.

Areas for Improvement:

- High Street Decline: There is significant concern about the declining state of the high street, with many empty shops, limited variety, and competition between similar businesses. Suggestions include reducing rates for larger stores and supporting independent businesses to fill the empty spaces.
- Maintenance and upgrade: Several facilities, such as the leisure centre, swimming pool, and youth centres, are described as outdated, drab, or in need of an upgrade.
- Underutilized Community Spaces: Existing community facilities are underused and respondents suggest organizing more events to encourage their use.
- Healthcare Access: Difficulty in accessing healthcare services like GP appointments and NHS dentists is a problem, with respondents feeling neglected in some cases.
- Transport and Accessibility: Issues around transport and accessibility were highlighted, especially for disabled individuals and those without cars. There is also concern about parking around schools and the need for better cycling and walking infrastructure.
- Funding and Staffing for Public Services: A recurring theme is the lack of sufficient funding and staffing in public services like schools, mental health services, and social work, leading to a strain on resources and lower quality of service.
- Overcrowding in Schools: With increasing populations in some areas, concerns about overcrowded schools and the impact on children's education were raised.

In summary, while facilities like schools, libraries, and local shops are valued, concerns focus on decline of the town centre, poor maintenance and upkeep and perceived lack of investment in existing facilities.

Youth concerns arising from HLH workshops:

- Lack of free to use social spaces for young people to meet and socialise.
- Perceived lack of affordable opportunities for physical activities.
- Young females do not feel safe on Dingwall High Street.
- Insufficient access to mental health support for young people.
- Lack of voice and influence over decisions affecting young people.

7 Local Living Outcomes

In the area of the **Dingwall & Seaforth Area** we surveyed **19547** Hex Cells - **5641** fall within Settlement Development Areas (SDAs)
Of these - **2026** Cells contain the **5664** Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells:

Dingwall and Seaforth Area Profile

73.7% of residential properties are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (1969)** or **Highly Walkable (2202)**
4.8% of residential properties (270) have **Few or No Walkable services**

The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in **Dingwall & Seaforth Area Committee Area** is **10.0** (out of a maximum possible of 16)

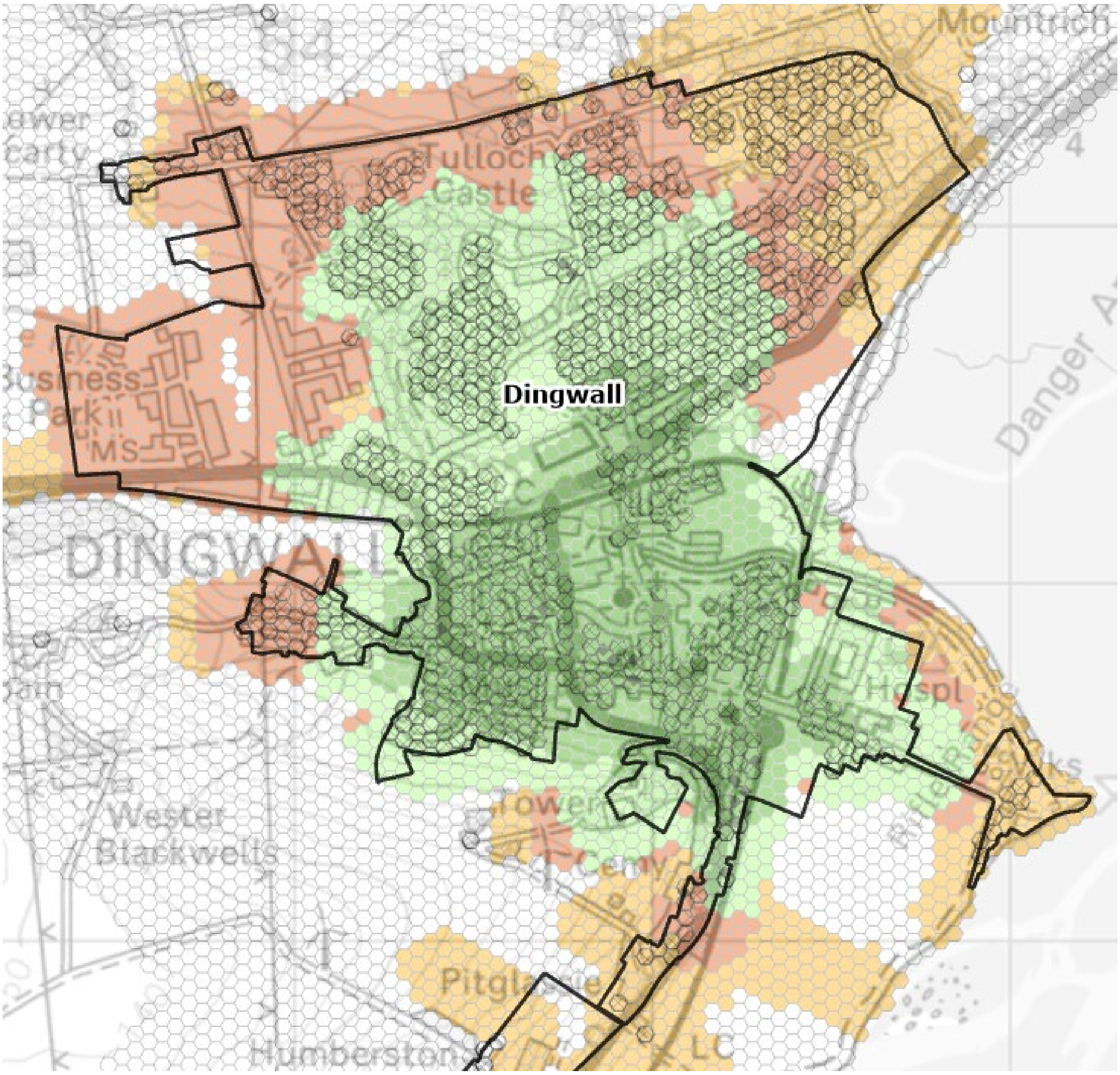
The highest scoring residential cells are in the area shown and score **15.6** out of the maximum possible of 16.

Dingwall and Muir Of Ord SDAs have the highest average residential score (at **10.5** per property)
Maryburgh SDA has the lowest average residential property score with an average of **6.5**

		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties						Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Name	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Total	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
	Conon Bridge	793	414	1009	10189	10.1	11.2	2.44	0	928	81	0	0	1009	0.0%	92.0%	8.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Dingwall	2339	847	2778	29234.2	10.5	15.6	3.28	1145	1070	349	209	5	2778	41.2%	38.5%	12.6%	7.5%	0.2%
	Maryburgh	533	206	522	3379.8	6.5	9.2	2.53	0	106	411	0	5	522	0.0%	20.3%	78.7%	0.0%	1.0%
	Muir of Ord	1910	545	1337	13973.8	10.5	13.4	2.45	824	98	370	44	1	1337	61.6%	7.3%	27.7%	3.3%	0.1%
	(Part of)Tore	66	14	18	91.6	5.1	7.2	1.29	0	0	12	6	0	18	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
	Grand Total	**5641**	**2026**	**5664**	**56868.4**	**10.0**	**15.6**	**2.80**	**1969**	**2202**	**1223**	**259**	**11**	**5664**	**34.8%**	**38.9%**	**21.6%**	**4.6%**	**0.2%**

Full details via [Local Living Mapping (arcgis.com)]

Appendix – Local Living Outcomes Maps for Main Settlements



Residential Property Count

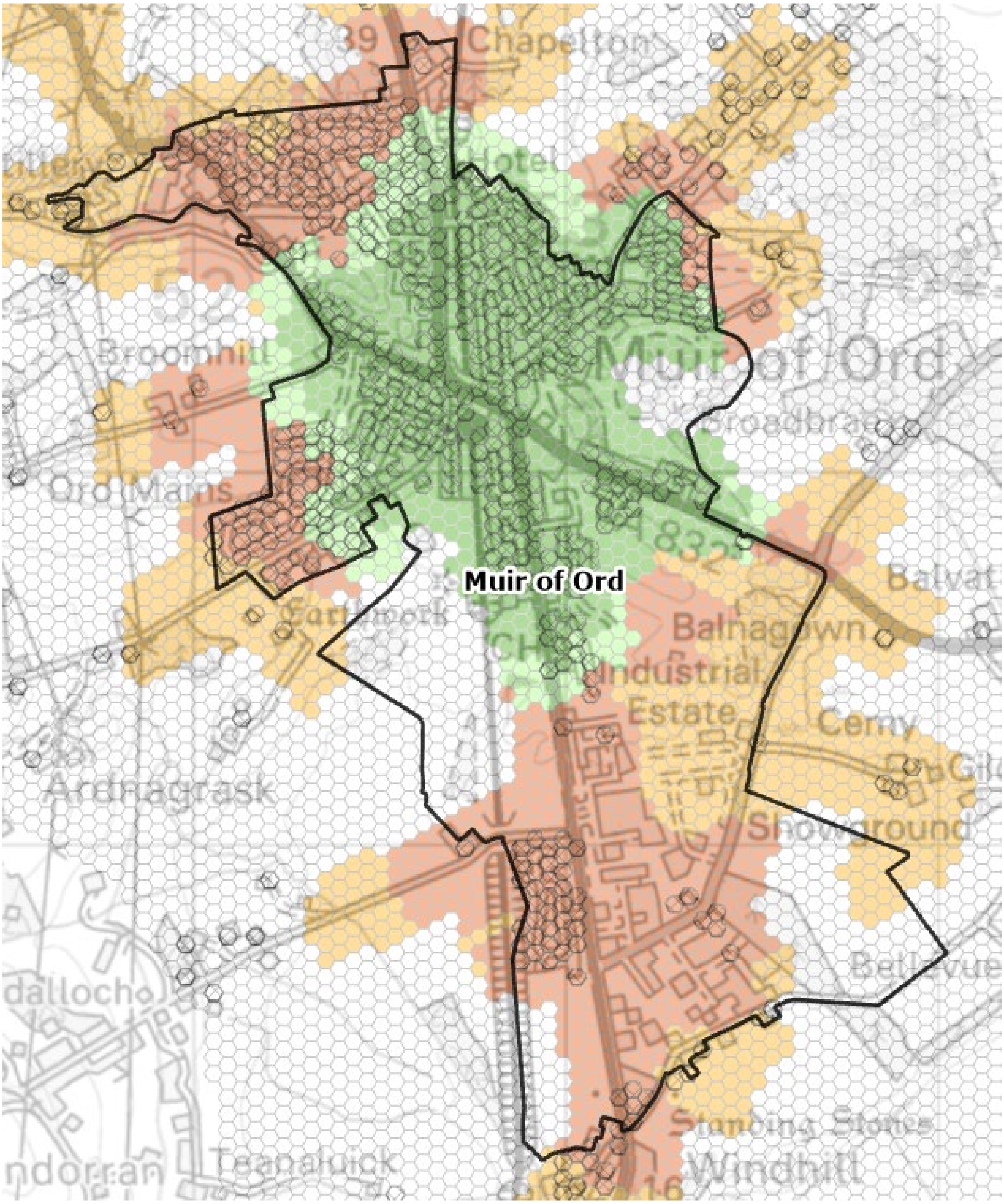
Count of Points

- 0 - 1
- 2 - 10
- 11 - 100

Local Living - Access to Services Score

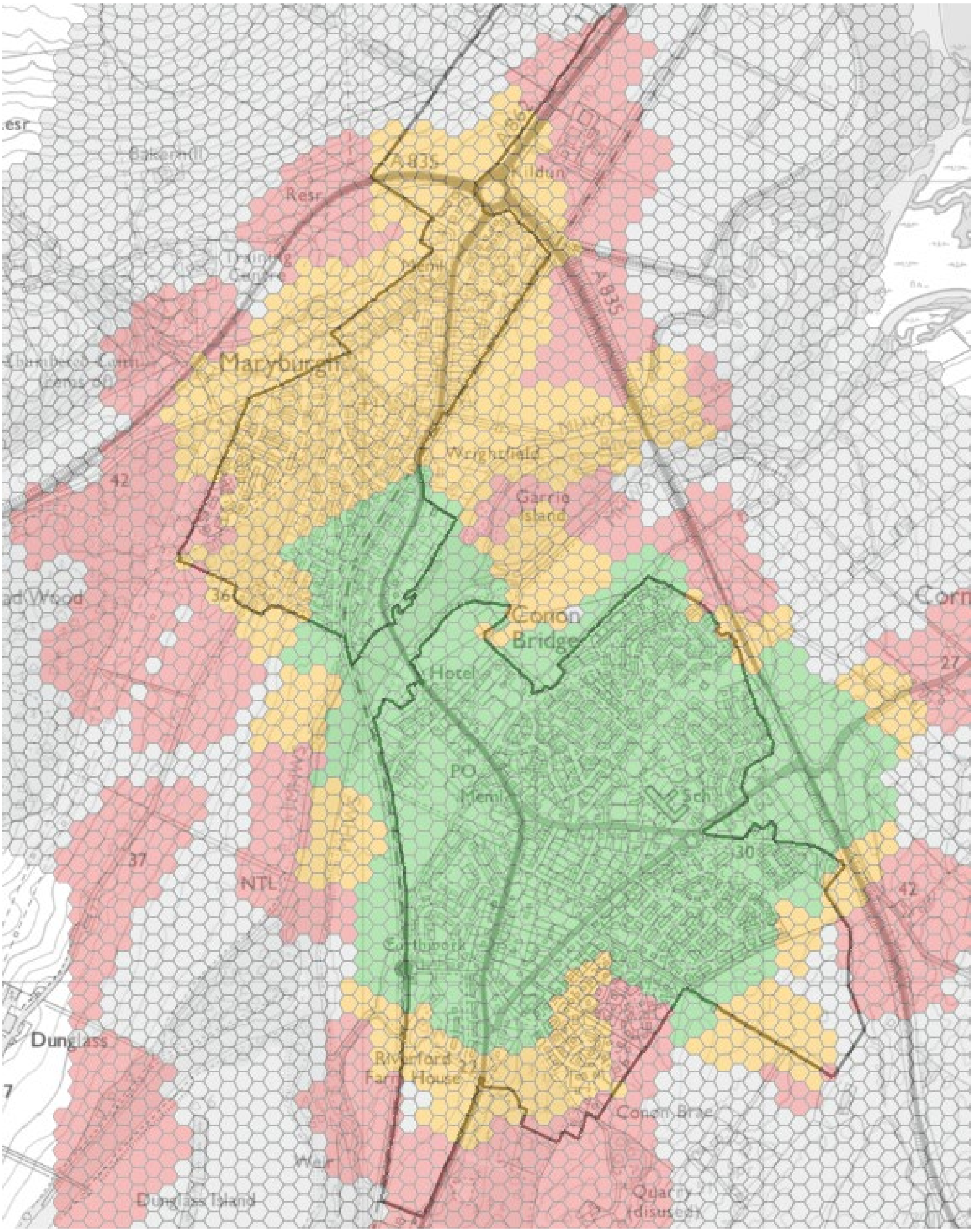
TOTAL

- 0 - 1.0
- 1.1 - 3.9
- 4.0 - 7.9
- 8.0 - 11.9
- 12.0 - 16.0


Chapelton
Muir of Ord
Broomhill
Ord Mains
Muir of Ord
Balnagown
Industrial Estate
Ardnagrask
Showground
Bellevue
Standing Stones
Windhill
Teanaluick

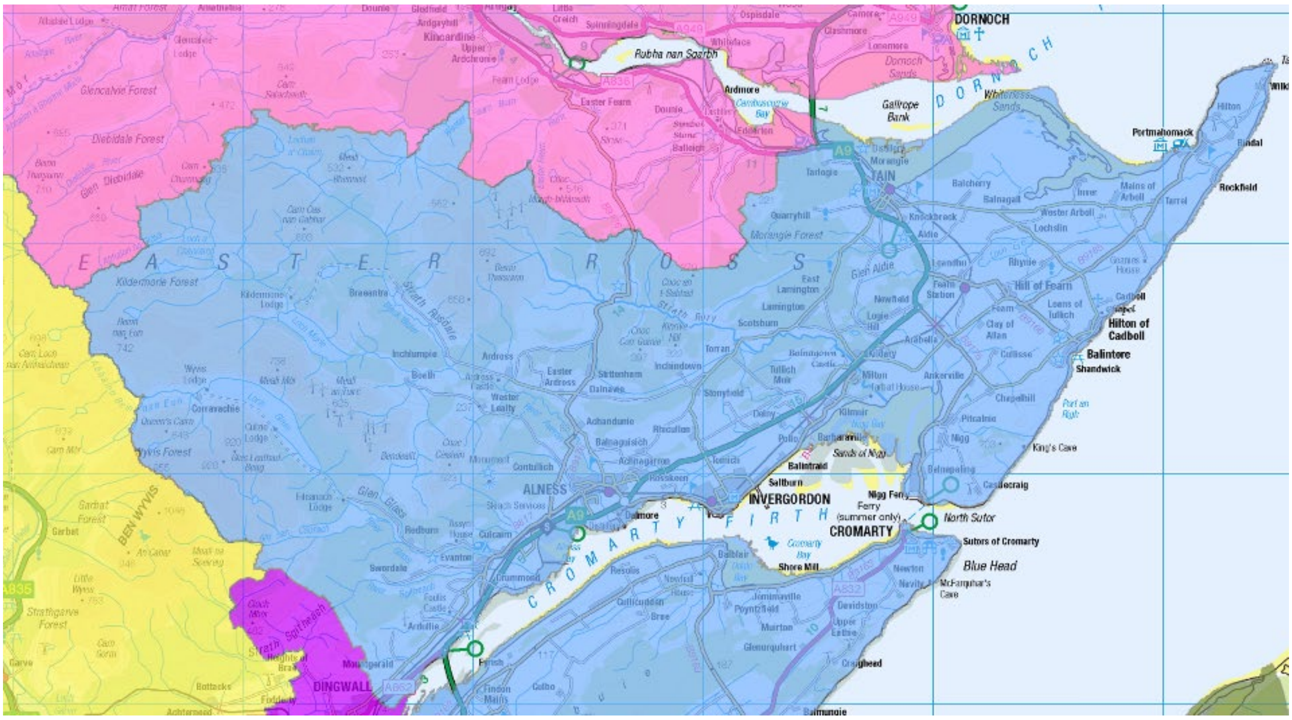
Dingwall and Seaforth Area Profile

Maryburgh and Conon Bridge



Easter Ross Area Profile

1 Easter Ross Area Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements are (main settlements defined within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 in order of sustainability) Alness, Invergordon, Tain, Evanton, and Seaboard Villages.

The Easter Ross Area has long history of settlement because it contains much of Highland's flatter, better drained, agriculturally productive land, has a drier and sunnier climate than the Highland average, and sheltered deep water ports which were initially used for military purposes. Despite these advantages, significant development and population didn't establish until the 1960s and 1970s with the inward investment in heavier industries such as those servicing offshore oil and gas production.

Each of the principal towns has good road and rail transport connections compared to the rest of Highland and fewer physical and environmental constraints to development than other areas. The landscape is principally rolling farmland often with attractive coastal views across the Cromarty, Dornoch and Moray Firths. Settlement is concentrated in a series of small towns or large villages most of which are strung along the old A9 route and railway line. The rural hinterland is upland, far less populous and large parts of it have been afforested.

Key factual information is set out in Section 4 below.

3 How well does the Area function?

The Area functions well compared to other parts of Highland. It is close enough and well connected enough to the City of Inverness to take advantage of its higher order facilities and employment opportunities but sufficiently separate not to be affected too much by the "overheating" effects of rapid growth such as traffic congestion and overburdened medical and school facilities. It is also close to emerging employment opportunities connected with the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport (ICFGF) project.

Challenges do exist, notably in terms of A9 junction capacity issues, controlling sporadic housing in the countryside development, which has adverse landscape and service provision cost impacts, and making sure that the main towns and villages are self-sufficient as possible in terms of a mix of uses and local access to daily needs. Revitalising the towns with community hub facilities such as the 3-18 Tain Campus is a key way to do this. The Area is well placed to take advantage of the job spin offs from the ICFGF project and land is already safeguarded for employment use at Nigg, Evanton, Alness and Invergordon.

4 **"Infrastructure First" Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures**

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within the Black Isle & Easter Ross Area there are 17,260 premises 10,008 (58%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 5,577 (32%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 1,675 (10%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities –** recently resolved (but developer contributions still payable), current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints at Bridgend Primary, Couhill Primary, Kiltearn Primary, Obsdale Primary and Craighill Primary - full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** - spare water capacity at sub-regional Loch Glass water source and works and at most main settlement sewage works but potential network capacity issues at Tain, Alness, Invergordon, and Evanton. However, limited spare capacity at Evanton sewage works.
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments** – all major settlements bypassed by A9 so intra settlement congestion is low however most A9 junctions have safety and capacity issues - elsewhere, road safety and maintenance issues predominate with more limited investment targeted to address these matters.
- **Health Facility Capacity** – during 2022/23 the County Community Hospital at Invergordon had over 95% bed occupancy but still performed well in terms of 99.9% A&E attendees being seen within 4 hours. All 3 GP practice groups at Alness, Invergordon and Tain have (July 2024) patients per GP numbers in excess of the Highland average of 770 patients per GP.

Easter Ross Area Profile

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 21,531 (9.1% of Highland's population)
- **Population Change** - (2011-2022) -2.4% (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%)
- **Age profile** - (Census 2022) 0-16 (19.4%) 65+ (23.2%) (higher proportion of young and similar proportion of old than Highland, lower proportion of working age than Scotland profile) – however falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023.
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** (Council Tax Data 2023 for Black Isle & Easter Ross committee area) 77.5%.
- **Households** – (Census 2022) 10,053 occupied households.
- **House Completions** - long term average 77 per year which is 7% of Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e.
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Area has a lower (6%) proportion than Highland (10%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating but a marginally lower (11%) proportion than Highland (13%) with worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights that some of the most deprived parts of Highland lie within the Area at Alness, Invergordon and Balintore - full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/.
- **Visitors to Highland** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK – most (75%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – half stayed in serviced accommodation – hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities.
- **Employment** – (Alness and Invergordon Travel to Work Area 2023) – 7,000 (full and part-time) jobs (8% of Highland's jobs), gross average weekly full time pay £773.90.
- **Working from Home & Commuting** – (Ward data from Census 2022) – 26.6% of the workforce work mainly from home (lower than Highland and Scotland averages) but 45.2% commute more than 10km to work (much higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- **Unemployment** – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active.
- **Employment sectors** – (2020 HIE data for Inner Moray Firth area) the top 3 employment sectors within the Inner Moray Firth area are: human health and social work (19.8%), wholesale and retail (14.8%) and accommodation and food services (11.1%).
- **Environmental and other constraints** - 56% of the Black Isle and Easter Ross Area is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Highland Council is currently finalising the preparation of an Area Place Plan (APP) which collates an overview of local priorities development, investment and service delivery across Easter Ross - identified through stakeholder and public engagement in addition to reviewing the content of existing plans and strategies across public and community partners. The APP will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

Local Place Plan details via
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
None to date

In Preparation
None to date

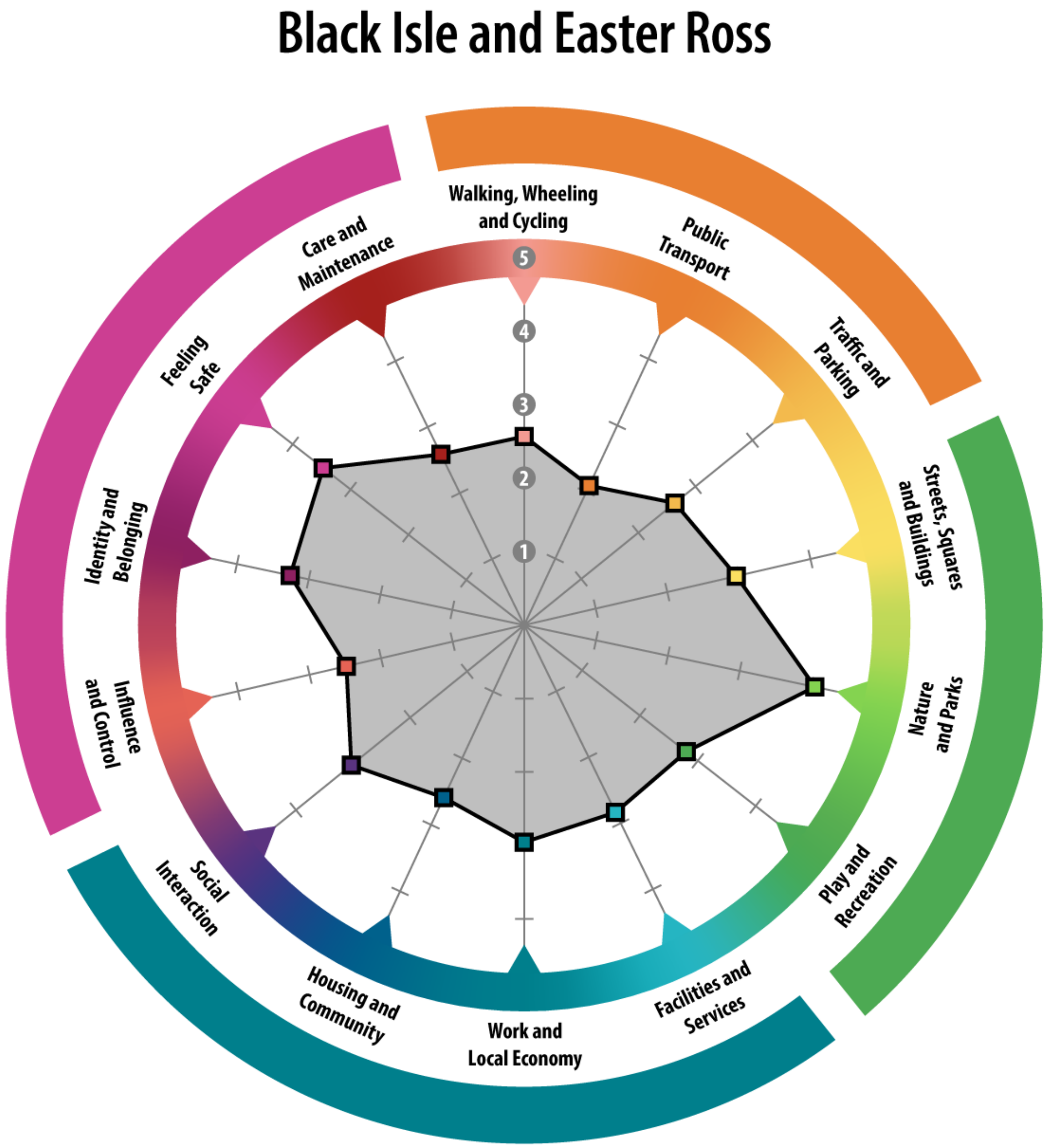
Community Partnership Plan
Easter Ross Community Partnership has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive, the CP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area.

Easter Ross Community Partnership is presently working up a plan for its area which will be directly aligned with the above mentioned Area Place Plan.

6 Place Standard

Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).

Easter Ross Area Profile



Easter Ross Average Score (2.7) is joint lowest among sub-regional areas in Highland.
Area response rate for the Place Standard Survey:

- 87 online responses.
- 81 young people engaged in HLH facilitated sessions.

Highest scores for area:

- *Nature & Parks* (3.9); *Feeling Safe* (3.4); *Feeling Proud & Part of Place (Identity & Belonging* (3.1); *Work & Local Economy* (2.9)

Lowest scores for area:

- *Public Transport* (2.0); *Play & Recreation* (2.4); *Housing & Community* (2.4); *Care & Maintenance* (2.4); *Influence & Control* (2.4)

Domains for which Easter Ross compares well with rest of Highland:

- *Traffic & Parking* (2.6) scored joint third highest in Highland.
- *Work & Local Economy* (2.9) scored joint fourth highest in Highland.

Domains for which Easter Ross scored low compared with rest of Highland:

- *Facilities & Services* (2.8) scored lowest in Highland.
- *Social Interaction* (2.9) scored joint-lowest in Highland.

Spaces grouping (3.0) scored joint-lowest in Highland; within which:

- *Play & Recreation* (2.4) and *Nature & Parks* (3.9) both scored lowest in Highland.
- *Streets, Squares & Buildings* (2.7) scored joint-lowest in Highland.

Civic & Stewardship grouping (2.8) scored joint-lowest in Highland; within which:

- *Care & Maintenance* (2.4) scored joint-lowest in Highland.
- *Feeling Proud & Part of Place (Identity & Belonging* (3.1) scored lowest in Highland.
- *Having a Say & Feeling Listened to (Voice & Influence)* (2.4) scored joint-lowest in Highland.
- *Feeling Safe* (3.4) scored joint second lowest in Highland.

Qualitative Feedback

<u>Positive Aspects</u>

- General proximity of shops, amenities and medical services within the area, although sometimes requiring leaving the local neighbourhood. However, rural residents are dependent on traveling by car to access services.
- Accessible opportunities for recreational walking and cycling; access to outdoor exercise in green spaces and natural landscape.
- General appreciation for sufficient, well maintained and free parking around amenities and town centres.
- Importance of local nature and biodiversity, including benefits from community managed woodland and green spaces.
- General regard for public libraries, leisure and sport facilities, while noting poor maintenance and limited evening opening hours.
- HIgh regard for the quality of recent new build social and mid-market housing, of benefit to families and retirees. However, there is a perceived lack of associated community facilities and transport links.

<u>Areas for improvement</u>

- Older social housing stock is in need of upgrading, including building condition, heating and insultation. Perceived need for significantly increased social housing and mid-market rental property for both residents and seasonal workers. Demand for smaller, accessible homes for the elderly and disabled.
- Concerns about limited access to GP appointments, distant pharmacies, and the absence of medical facilities in some communities.
- Widespread concern over poor pavement condition (particularly for wheelchair users and those with poor mobility), road condition (potholes, surfaces and crumbling gutters). Desire for segregated routes for walking, with zebra crossings and dedicated cycling lanes.
- Improved signage and wayfinding for walking and cycling routes for navigation and safety.
- Importance of commuting to Inverness for employment opportunities is challenged by public transport links and integration between train and bus services. Perceived high cost, infrequency and unreliability of some public transport services, particularly direct connections between settlements.
- While there is high regard for the area's architectural heritage, concerns were raised about vacant town centre property, derelict buildings and maintenance of public spaces – including overgrowth, blocked drains and regular flooding. General frustration with the condition of school buildings, town halls and public spaces.
- Demand for community-focused outdoor areas with seating, shelter, bins and amenities like cafes and toilets. Improved drainage and accessibility of existing green spaces for year-round use.
- Poor maintenance of some formal play areas – broken equipment, overgrowth and broken glass, lack of bins for dog fouling. Demand for play spaces designed for older teenagers and adults. Maintenance of existing community facilities was also raised as a significant concern.
- Advocacy for increased local control over decision making, including funding necessary to address local needs – including the role of local volunteers in maintenance and civic activity to address perceived decline of the area.

Youth concerns arising from HLH workshops:

- Appreciation for youth facilities and public open green spaces for recreation; concern over closure of Youth Centre, due to lack of funding. Concerns over maintenance and cleanliness of open spaces as dependent on limited local volunteers. Little pride in place.
- Path maintenance, including broken glass is an impediment to getting around by bike and scooter.
- Feeling unsafe around Alness high street and some areas of housing at night time.
- Appreciation for local high street shops, alongside lack of awareness of local library services and concern over out of town locations for major retail.
- Concern over the poor condition and relative isolation of housing stock in Milnafua area of Alness.

- Notable uncertainty regarding future decisions & opportunities: green freeport; climate action; identity of the area; school estates; funding (including common good).

7 Local Living Outcomes

In the area of the **Black Isle and Easter Ross Committee Area** we surveyed **60859** Hex Cells

Of these **19162** - fall within SDAs or the area of Growing Settlements (Dingwall and Conon Bridge fringe cells excluded)
4571 Cells contain the **11861** Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells:

67.1% of residential properties are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (1264)** or **Highly Walkable (1877)**
7.1% of residential properties (326) have **Few or No Walkable services**

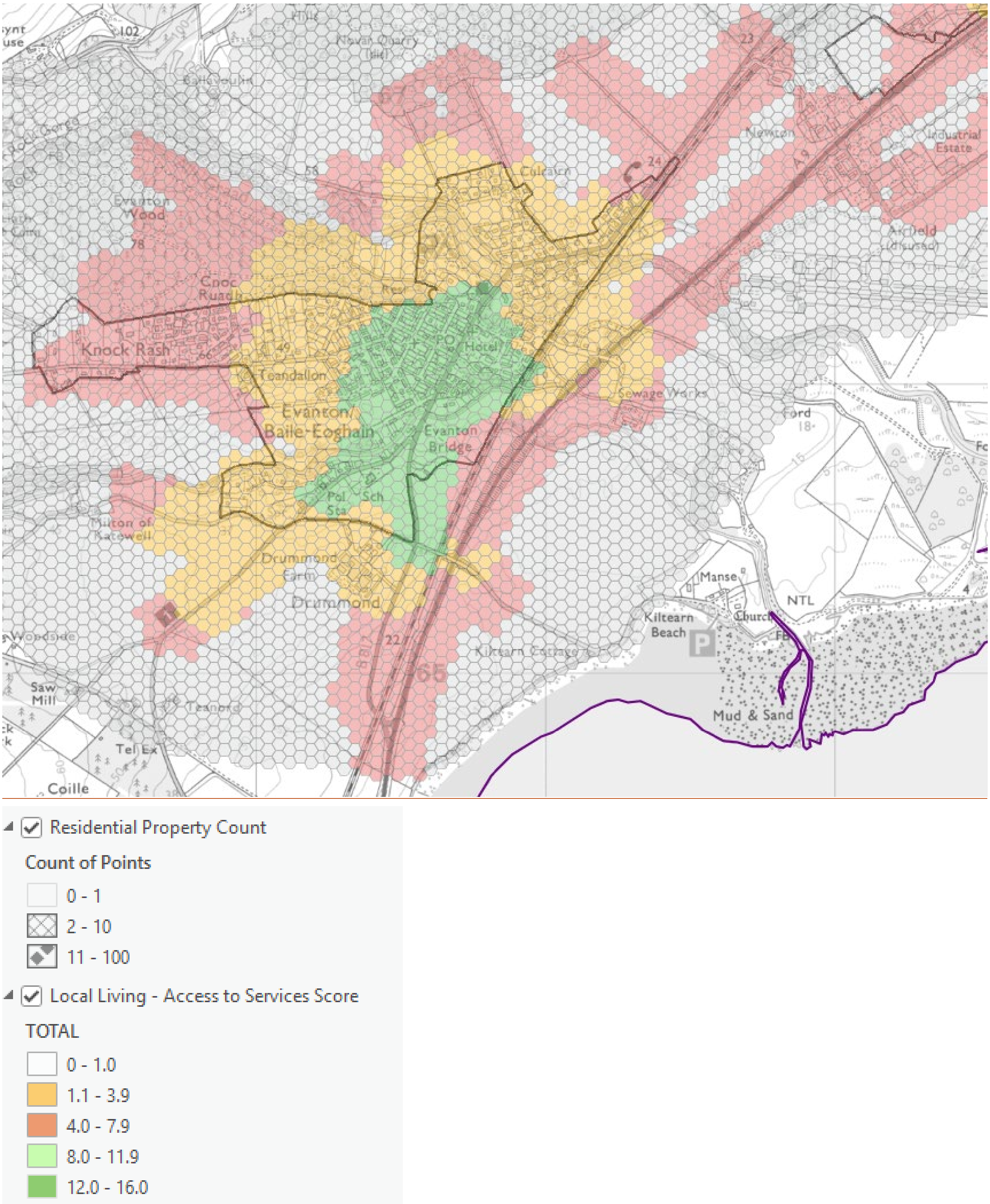
The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in **the Black Isle and Easter Ross Committee Area** Is **9.9** (out of a maximum possible of 16)

Cromarty SDA has the highest average residential score (at **13.4** per property)
Rhicullen/Newmore Growing Settlement area residential properties score an average of **2.7**

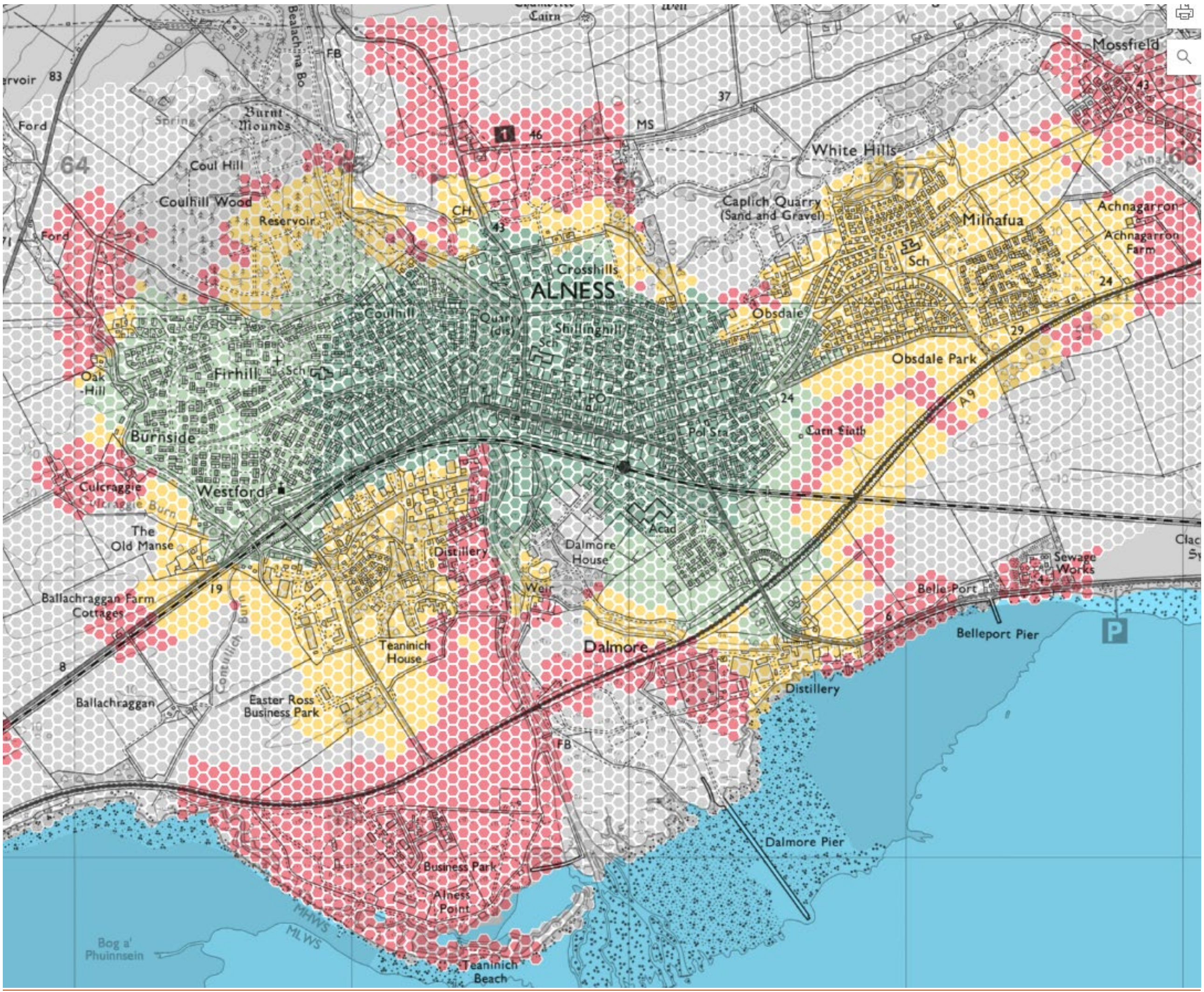
		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties							Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Name	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Total	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
SDA	North Kessock	709	299	637	5109.6	8.0	10.8	2.13	0	204	83	12	0	299	0.0%	68.2%	27.8%	4.0%	0.0%
SDA	Tore	249	40	47	266.0	5.7	7.2	1.18	0	0	40	0	0	40	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Avoch	593	219	539	5085.4	9.4	10.6	2.46	0	181	22	16	0	219	0.0%	82.6%	10.0%	7.3%	0.0%
SDA	Culbokie	380	209	319	2186.6	6.9	9.4	1.53	0	58	151	0	0	209	0.0%	27.8%	72.2%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Evanton	836	297	658	5378.4	8.2	10.0	2.22	0	208	40	47	2	297	0.0%	70.0%	13.5%	15.8%	0.7%
SDA	Invergordon	2206	534	1897	17545.8	9.2	15.2	3.55	162	183	124	65	0	534	30.3%	34.3%	23.2%	12.2%	0.0%
SDA	Alness	3082	984	2984	32859.0	11.0	15.6	3.03	420	299	241	22	2	984	42.7%	30.4%	24.5%	2.2%	0.2%
GS	Rhicullen_Newmore	3267	76	84	229.6	2.7	4.6	1.11	0	0	27	30	19	76	0.0%	0.0%	35.5%	39.5%	25.0%
SDA	Seaboard Villages	546	211	540	4227.0	7.8	11.8	2.56	0	120	78	13	0	211	0.0%	56.9%	37.0%	6.2%	0.0%
SDA	Tain	1897	598	1738	22001.0	12.7	15.6	2.91	363	113	115	4	3	598	60.7%	18.9%	19.2%	0.7%	0.5%
GS	Barbaraville	420	66	119	477.4	4.0	4.8	1.80	0	0	65	1	0	66	0.0%	0.0%	98.5%	1.5%	0.0%
GS	Milton of Kildary	2071	153	368	2644.4	7.2	9.0	2.41	0	71	26	49	7	153	0.0%	46.4%	17.0%	32.0%	4.6%
GS	Hill of Fearn	448	81	169	1483.8	8.8	9.4	2.09	0	77	4	0	0	81	0.0%	95.1%	4.9%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Inver	533	55	115	803.0	7.0	7.2	2.09	0	0	55	0	0	55	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Portmahomack	762	123	245	2347.4	9.6	10.0	1.99	0	111	2	10	0	123	0.0%	90.2%	1.6%	8.1%	0.0%
SDA	Munlochy	245	113	242	2733.0	11.3	11.8	2.14	0	107	4	2	0	113	0.0%	94.7%	3.5%	1.8%	0.0%
SDA	Fortrose and Rosemarkie	918	513	1160	11778.4	10.2	14.2	2.26	207	144	140	22	0	513	40.4%	28.1%	27.3%	4.3%	0.0%
SDA	Cromarty	262	113	355	4768.2	13.4	13.6	3.14	112	1	0	0	0	113	99.1%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		19424	**4684**	**12216**	**121924.0**	**10.0**	**15.6**	**2.61**	**1264**	**1877**	**1217**	**293**	**33**	**4684**	**27.0%**	**40.1%**	**26.0%**	**6.3%**	**0.7%**

Full details via Local Living Mapping (arcgis.com)

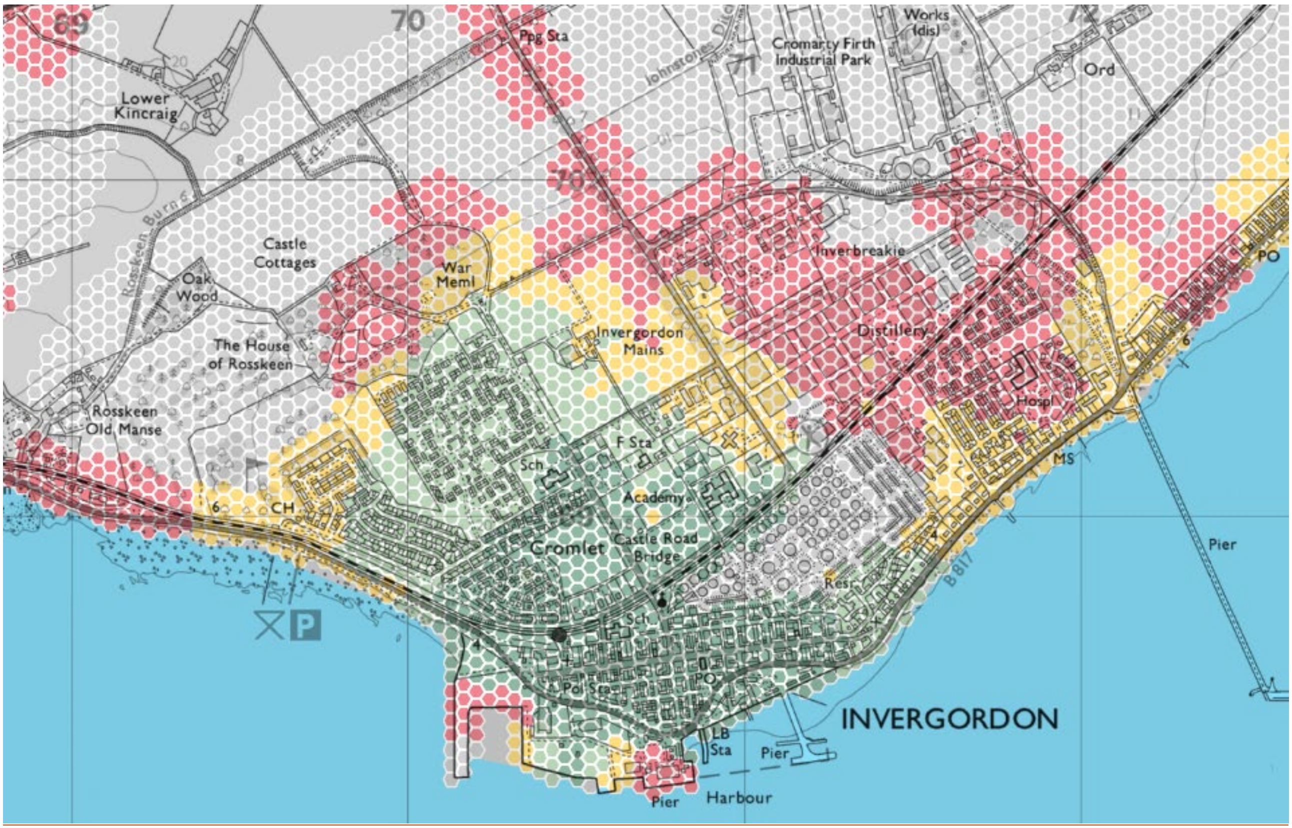
Appendix – Local Living Outcomes for Main Settlements



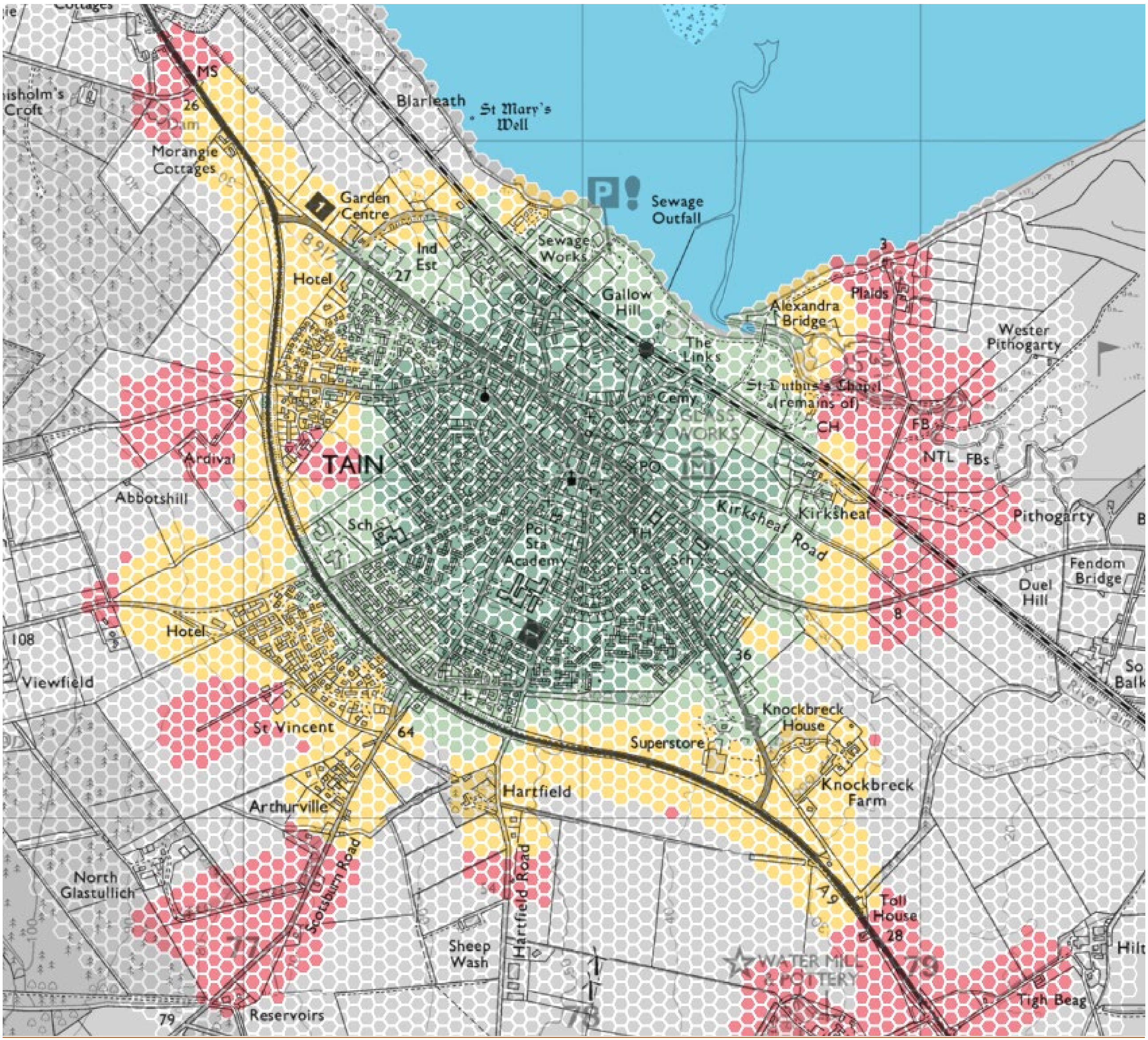
Easter Ross Area Profile

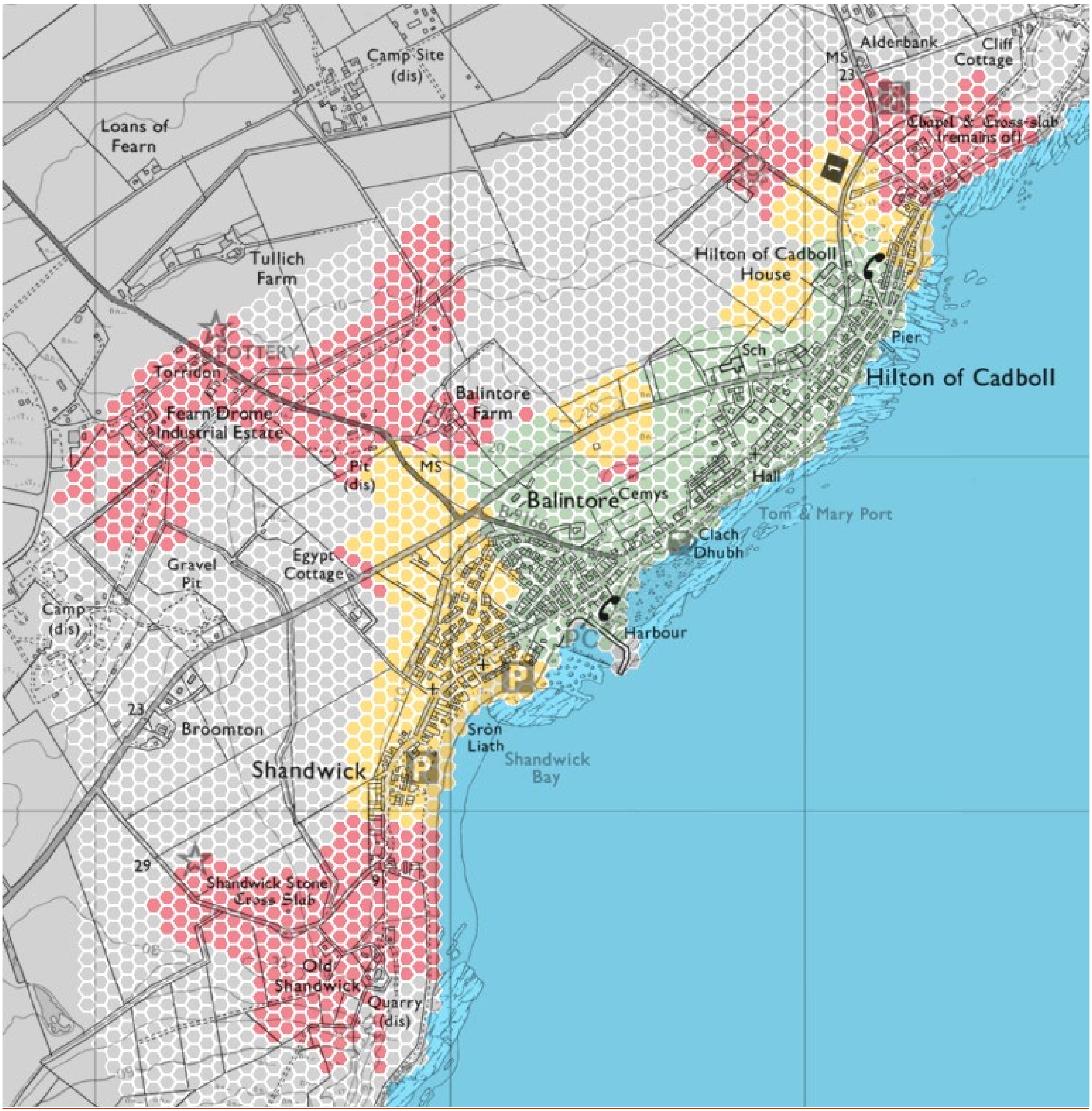


Easter Ross Area Profile



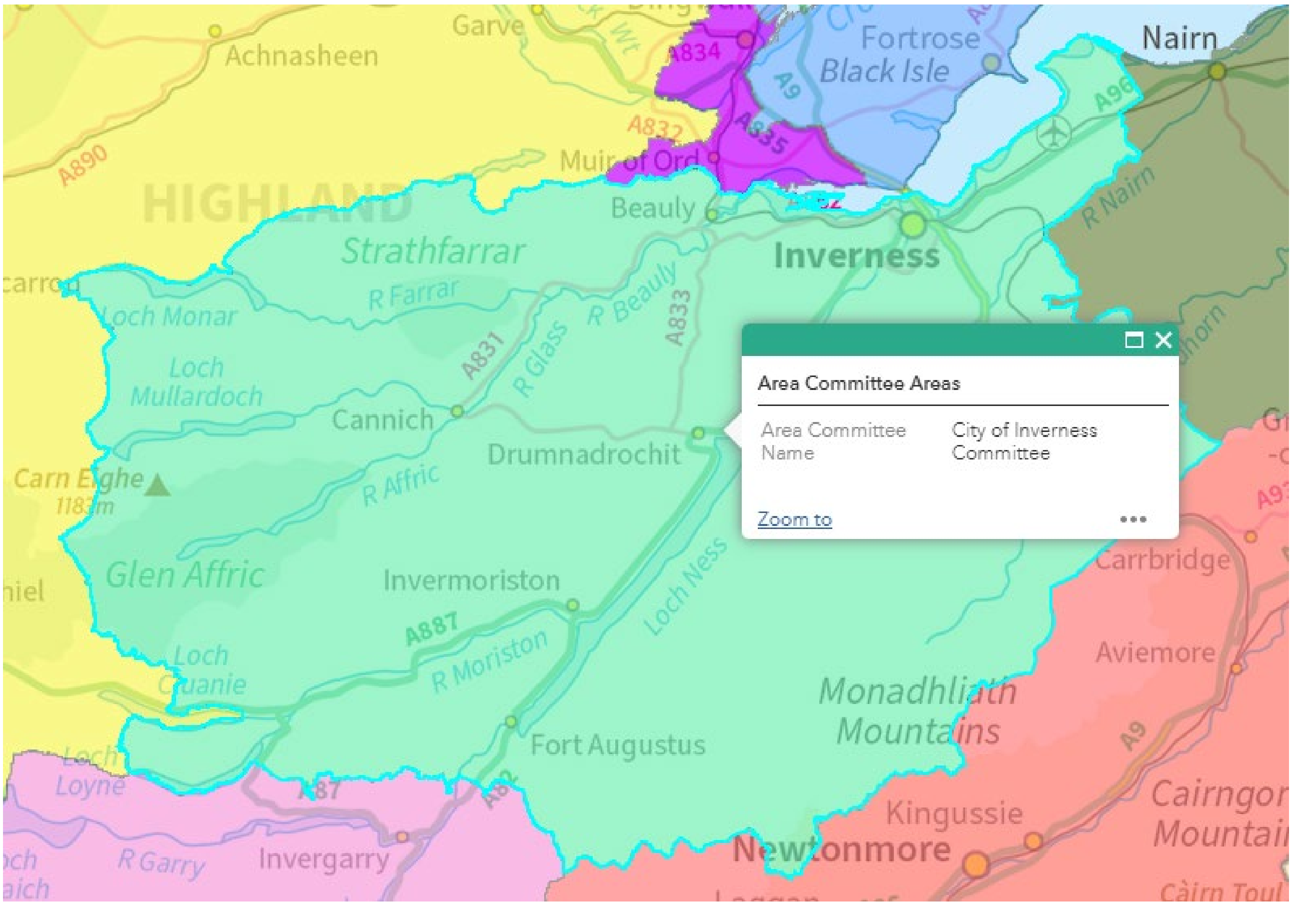
Easter Ross Area Profile




Camp Site
(dis)
Loans of
Fearn
Alderbank
Cliff
Cottage
MS
23
Chapel & Cross-slab
(remains of)
Tullich
Farm
Hilton of Cadboll
House
POTTERY
Torridon
Fearn Drome
Industrial Estate
Balintore
Farm
Pier
Hilton of Cadboll
Sch
Pit
(dis)
MS
Balintore
Cemys
Hall
Tom & Mary Port
B9166
Clach
Dhubh
Gravel
Pit
Egypt
Cottage
Camp
(dis)
Harbour
23
Broomton
Shandwick
Sròn
Liath
Shandwick
Bay
29
Shandwick Stone
Cross Slab
Old
Shandwick
Quarry
(dis)

City of Inverness Area Profile

1 Inverness Area Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements are (main settlements defined within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 in order of sustainability) City of Inverness, Beauly, Tornagrain, Ardersier, Drumnadrochit, Fort Augustus, Croy, Kiltarlity, Tomatin, Kirkhill and Dores

The City of Inverness Area is the most physically, environmentally and economically diverse of all subregions in Highland and arguably one of the most in Scotland because of its extremes of remote and inaccessible uplands and a quickly expanding coastal city. The area is the economic, public facility and transport network hub for wider Highland. Most settlement is concentrated on the coastal margins where the more developable, better connected and agriculturally productive land lies. Its economy drives that of Highland. Yet it also includes far remoter far more fragile land and communities on its inland margins where renewable energy and tourism opportunities predominate but connectivity to facilities is poor and there is a very low year-round population. Reversing this urban-rural disparity is economically impracticable. Instead, investment is being channelled into maximising the benefits of planned urban expansion and the preservation and restoration of the remoter rural areas.

Key factual information is set out in Section 4 below.

3 How well does the Area function?

The urban-rural disparity across the area creates challenges. The City's road congestion, overburdened health facilities and overcrowded schools are typical consequences of rapid growth and inadequate public and private resources to cater for that growth. In contrast, the remoter rural areas generally have more infrastructure capacity but networks usually have more maintenance issues whether it's Victorian school buildings or dated road bridges.

Deciding where limited current and future public investment in infrastructure should be directed is the challenge. The cost per housing unit or per person is generally lower in larger settlements and therefore most future development and most future infrastructure investment should be directed in that way. However, there will be exceptions because the pattern of development and investment is also driven by political priorities, by land availability, and by unforeseen opportunities. For example, the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport project is a current initiative that may disrupt the optimum pattern and timing of future growth. The aim should be all public and private agencies coordinating their investment by location and over time so that development can happen at least cost and most benefit to all.

4 "Infrastructure First" Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within the Inverness Area there are 47,058 premises 34,362 (73%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 9,844 (21%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 2,852 (6%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities -** current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints at Charleston Academy, Beauly Primary, Kirkhill Primary, Culloden Academy, Croy Primary, Inverness Royal Academy, Ness Castle Primary and Millburn Academy – full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024.
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** - spare water capacity at Glenconvinth, Ashie, Loch Glass and Loch Ness Regional water treatment works - spare sewerage capacity for Inverness City and A96 Corridor but not for smaller village settlements.
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments -** Inverness City experiences the most road congestion with particular congestion at the Raigmore interchange, A9/A82, A82/Harbour Road, and Inshes junctions – capacity investment scheduled for A9 (Tomatin to Moy), East Link (A9 to A96) and Inshes junction over period 2024-2029 – elsewhere, road safety and maintenance issues predominate with more limited investment targeted to address these matters.
- **Health Facility Capacity** – the RNI Community Hospital and New Craigs Hospital were operating at greater than 90% occupancy in the 2022-2023 year – the number of registered patients per GP is higher than the Highland average of 770 at the following practices Fort Augustus, Culloden (where both practices are now capped), Kingsmills, Riverside, Kinmylies, Southside, Burnfield (Harris Road), Crown and Cairn (Culduthel Road) (last 7 all Inverness) and below that Highland average at Beauly, Drumnadrochit, Foyers, Fairfield and Dunedin (last 2 in Inverness).

City of Inverness Area Profile

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 83,289 (35.4% of Highland population)
- **Population Change** - (2011-2022) + 4.7% (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%)
- **Age profile** (Census 2022) 0-16 (17.9%) 65+ (20.2%) (younger than Highland profile, similar to Scotland profile) – however falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** - (Council Tax data 2023) 89.7%
- **Households** - (Census 2022) 39,104 occupied households
- **House Completions** - long term average 505 per year which is 43% of Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Area has higher (13%) proportion than Highland (10%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating and lower (6%) proportion than Highland (13%) with worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights extremes within Inverness City with poverty most pronounced within Inverness Central, Merkinch and Hilton and of very low comparative levels within Drummond, Crown, Balloch and Drakies – full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/
- **Visitors to Inverness** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 717 overnight visitors to Inverness found that 2/3 were international and only 1/3 from the UK – most (86%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – 3/4 stayed in serviced accommodation – top Inverness attraction was the castle
- **Employment** – (Inverness Travel to Work Area 2023) – 52,000 employees (around half of Highland 105,400 employee jobs), gross average full time weekly pay £744.80 – productivity (GVA/filled job) £53,700 compared to UK average of £57,721 – 15 minute average commute time
- **Working from Home & Commuting** – (Ward data from Census 2022) – within the City of Inverness around 28% of the workforce work mainly from home (lower than Highland and Scotland averages) but within the rural hinterland the percentage is higher than those averages. In particular, the Aird & Loch Ness Ward has 34.7% homeworking and longer distance commuting (50.7% of those working commute more than 10km to work (much higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- **Unemployment** – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active
- **Employment sectors** – (2020 HIE data for Inner Moray Firth area) the top 3 employment sectors in Inner Moray Firth: human health and social work (19.8%), wholesale and retail (14.8%) and accommodation and food services (11.1%)
- **Environmental constraints** - 83% of Inverness district covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from an adopted road, and future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas.

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Local Place Plan details via
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
Stratherrick and Foyers Local Place Plan – details via
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2302/stratherrick_and_foyers_local_place_plan

In Preparation

- Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Local Place Plan
- Glen Urquhart Local Place Plan
- Dores and Essich Community Local Place Plan
- Strathnairn Local Place Plan
- Croy and Culloden Moor Local Place Plan
- Kirkhill & Bunchrew Community Local Place Plan

- Highland Council is also leading collaborative preparation of a 'place based' overview of existing plans, strategies and community priorities for development and investment across the city and area. This 'Inverness Strategy' will comprise a distillation of priorities for the future, including key opportunities for the area and consideration of significant sites. The overview is currently in draft form, subject to engagement with local businesses, public and other stakeholders across public and third sector organisations, working towards completion by year end 2024. The inverness Strategy will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

Community Partnership Plan
Inverness Community Partnership has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the city and area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive, the CP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area.

Inverness Area Locality Action Plan via https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Inverness-Area-Action-Plan.pdf – 4 key objectives: poverty reduction; good mental health and wellbeing; fewer barriers to accessing local services; stronger, safer and more resilient communities.

City of Inverness Area Profile

Inverness Community Partnership is a key stakeholder involved in preparation of the Inverness Strategy, outlined above.

6 Place Standard

Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).

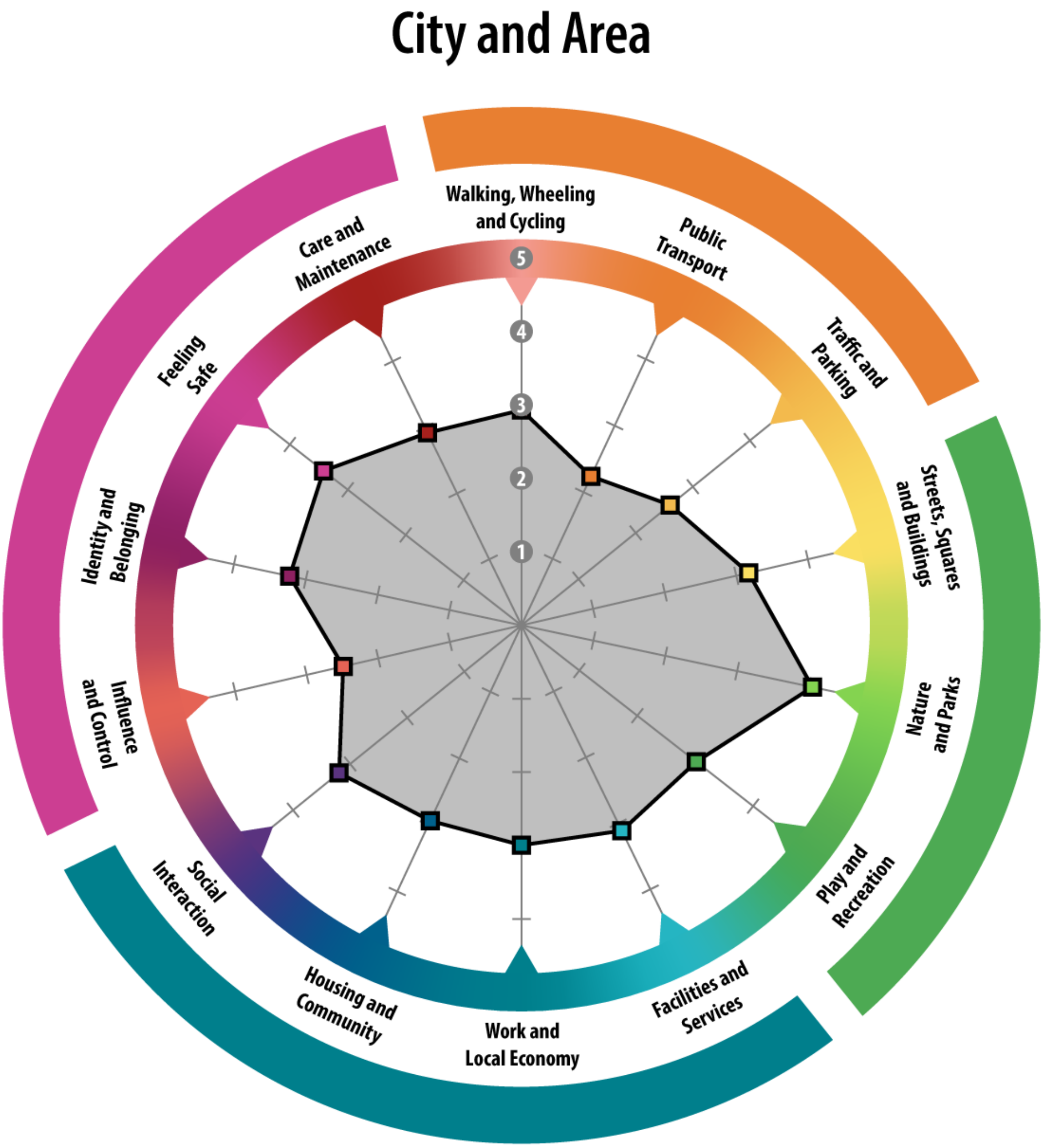


Figure 1 Place Standard Tool for City & Area

City of Inverness Area Profile

Response rate: **285 online responses** (183 from city, 102 from wider area), **plus 143 young people** engaged in HLH facilitated workshops.

City and Area average score (3.0) is joint second highest among sub-regional areas.

Across each category, differences in scoring between residents and young people within and outside the city are represented in the summary table below. Broadly, young people outside the city tended to have higher regard for their neighbourhoods. Whereas young people resident within the city tended to have lower regard for the quality of neighbourhoods.

		City & Area	City & Area (youth)	City	City (youth)	Non-city	Non-city (youth)
Area Overview	**Area Average Score**	**3.0**	**2.9**	**3.0**	**2.8**	**3.0**	**3.3**
	Movement	2.5	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.3	2.9
	Spaces	3.5	3.1	3.2	2.9	3.7	3.7
	Resources	2.8	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.5
	Civic & Stewardship	3.3	2.7	3.0	2.5	3.2	3.1

Highest scores for area: *Nature & Parks* (4.0); *Feeling Safe* (3.4); *Identity & Belonging (Pride in Place)* (3.3); *Facilities & Services* (3.1)

Lowest scores for area: *Public Transport* (2.2); *Influence & Control* (2.5); *Traffic & Parking* (2.6) *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.9), *Care & Maintenance* (2.9)

Domains for which Inverness & Area compares well with rest of Highland:

- *Housing & Community* (3.0) scored joint highest in Highland.
- *Work & Local Economy* (3.0) scored joint highest in Highland.
- *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.9) scored joint highest in Highland. However, scoring was notably lower among respondents from outside the city.
- *Facilities & Services* (3.1) and *Care & Maintenance* (2.9) scored joint second highest in Highland.

Domains for which Inverness & Area scores low compared with rest of Highland:

- *Feeling safe* (3.4) scored joint second lowest in Highland (particularly low for young people within the city).

Qualitative Feedback

<u>Movement: Positive Aspects</u>

- The recent implementation of 20 mph zones in residential areas has generally been well received, making these areas feel safer for pedestrians.
- Scenic walking routes along the riverside and canal, as well as dedicated cycle routes and shared use paths are valued by residents. However, there is demand for more seating.

- Appreciation for the recent introduction of electric busses and connections to settlements outside the city, particularly Beauly. However, many cited concerns over unreliability of bus services (late and cancelled), particularly during peak times and in rural areas.

Movement: Areas for improvement

- Frequent calls for improved road and pavement maintenance, particularly potholes and narrow paths. Accessibility of paths and crossings for wheelchair users was also a concern.
- Many residents express need for safer, more continuous and well-connected cycling routes, with segregated lanes - particularly in busy areas like Raigmore interchange and the city centre. There are also concerns about a lack of secure bicycle parking. Others raise concerns over cyclists using pavements, putting pedestrians at risk.
- While some residents feel the city is too car-focused, with requests for more pedestrianised areas and measures to reduce city centre traffic, others highlight perceived lack and high cost of parking necessary to encourage city centre visits by car. Parking availability is a major concern in tourist hotspots.

Spaces: Positive Aspects:

- Residents value the city's historic buildings, areas with wider pavements and the pedestrianised high street. Particular regard was noted for the library.
- The city's accessible green spaces are highly appreciated for mental health and wellbeing.
- Appreciation for recreational and sports facilities, alongside concerns about the condition and safety of existing play areas, which could better cater to various age groups and abilities.

Spaces: Areas for Improvement:

- Many areas are seen as poorly maintained, with litter, graffiti, poor lighting and neglected (or lacking) green spaces; including the city centre, Merkinch, Dalneigh, Culloden, Hilton and Raigmore. In rural areas, upkeep of public spaces has benefited significantly from volunteer efforts.
- While rural areas are generally regarded as well maintained, the city centre and Academy Street, in particular, is regarded as poorly maintained and unappealing. There is demand for more colour and character in the design of new buildings and for increased green spaces and street art.
- There is significant concern about energy projects, including pylons, substations, battery farms and wind farms, which residents feel threaten to disrupt recreational areas, the natural beauty and local wildlife.

Resources - Positive Aspects:

- General appreciation for the role of facilities within neighbourhoods for community support and cohesion; including leisure centres, schools, shops, and churches (particularly the role of community centres providing an increasing variety of necessary services in rural areas).

- Feedback highlights abundant employment in retail and tourism, while calling for more opportunities in higher paying roles, including green technology.
- Variety of housing types, community events, parks and green spaces are highlighted as benefiting local neighbourhoods. Community-driven housing development in rural areas is particularly highlighted as beneficial and in keeping with local aesthetics.

Resources – Areas for Improvement:

- Affordability of housing and limited public transportation are highlighted as both an issue for residents and a barrier to attracting and retaining talented recruits for employment.
- The prevalence of short-term lets is regarded as detrimental to both affordability of housing and community cohesion – which could also benefit from prioritising community facilities and safe spaces for intergenerational interaction within neighbourhoods.
- Public facilities are regarded as poorly resourced and maintained, with particular calls for increased provision of GP and dental surgeries, as well as maintenance and upgrading of schools.
- Strong demand for more variety of independent retailers, particularly for clothing.

Civic & Stewardship – Positive Aspects:

- Upkeep of the Town House and Castle is appreciated, as are community initiatives, like neighbourhood gardens.
- Opportunities to engage with Community Councils and the Local Authority are valued. However, there is significant scepticism over responsiveness and regard given to local views in decision making, particularly in relation to planning applications.

Civic & Stewardship – Areas for Improvement:

- City identity: significant concern over rising living costs and the consideration of residents' needs, which are perceived to have been impacted by a prioritisation of tourism.
- Concerns over drug and alcohol misuse in the city centre.
- Desire for more youth facilities and community activities to mitigate antisocial behaviour.

Climate Change:

- A central theme of support for improved public transport and infrastructure for cycling and walking to enable sustainable local travel.
- Support for increased city green spaces and tree planting.
- Support for increased encouragement of recycling.
- Division of opinion regarding the role of wind farms and associated infrastructure.

- Flood defences and coastal erosion highlighted as a concern to future maintenance of the area's natural beauty.

Youth concerns arising from HLH workshops:

- While young people value free bus travel, they report services to be highly unreliable.
- Demand for repaired or improved equipment in parks and outdoor spaces, as well as increased availability of youth activities and clubs within local areas.
- Littering of outdoor spaces, particularly broken glass as a deterrent to using them.
- Importance of protecting biodiversity and restoring natural habitats.
- Public places and transport to allow young people to socialise in rural areas.
- General regard for leisure facilities and activities as expensive, even with a student discount.
- Street lighting was regularly highlighted as important to feeling safe.
- Feeling unsafe on some school transport routes.

7 Local Living Outcomes

In the area of the **City of Inverness and Area Committee Area** we surveyed **61357** Hex Cells

Of these - **11052** Cells contain the **37331** Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells:

71.5% of residential properties are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (12582)** or **Highly Walkable (14117)**
4.0% of residential properties (1485) have **Few or No Walkable services**

The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in the **City of Inverness and Area Committee Area** is 9**.9** (out of a maximum possible of 16)

The highest scoring residential cells are in the area shown and score **15.6** (out of a maximum possible of 16).

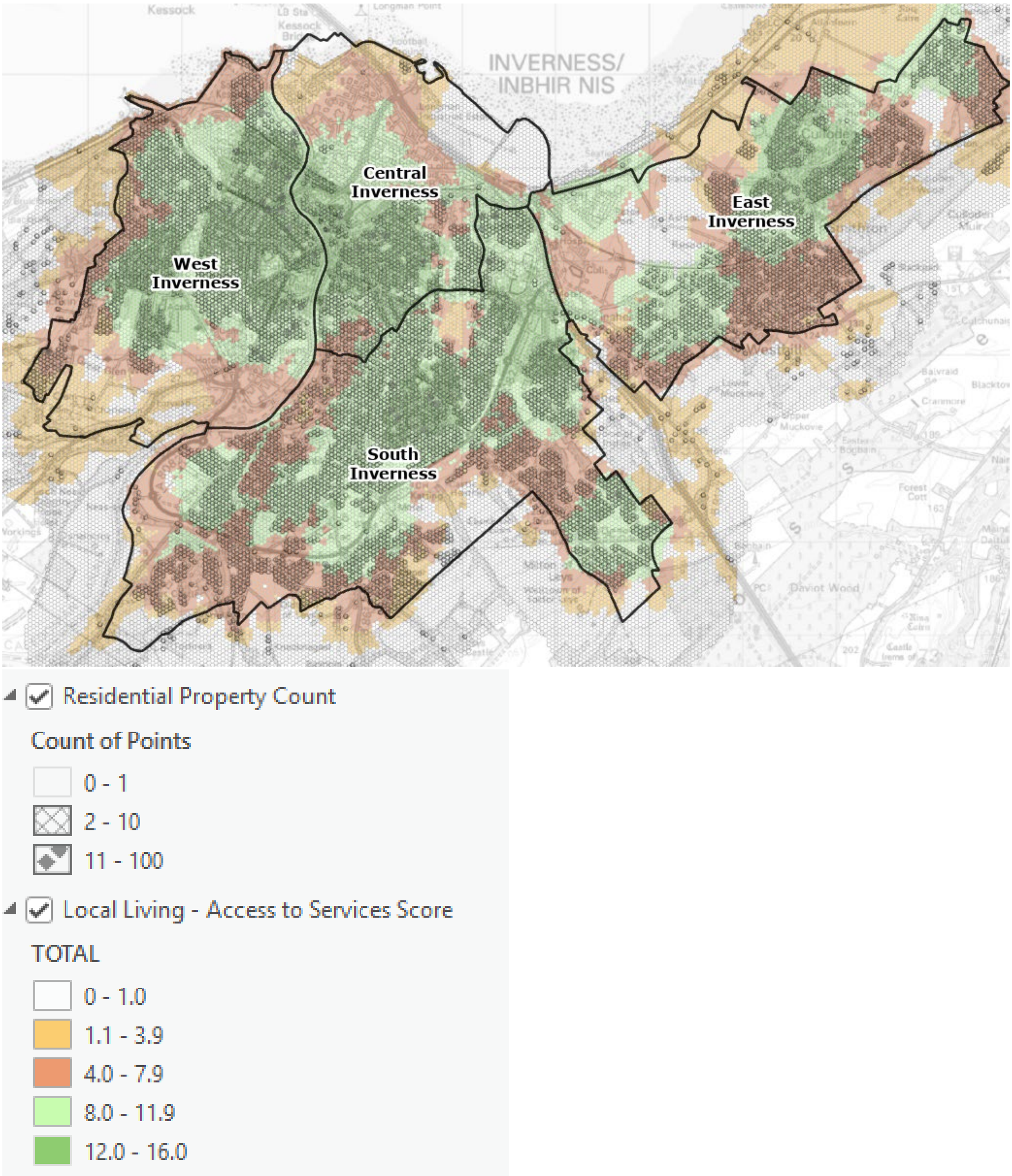
City of Inverness Area Profile

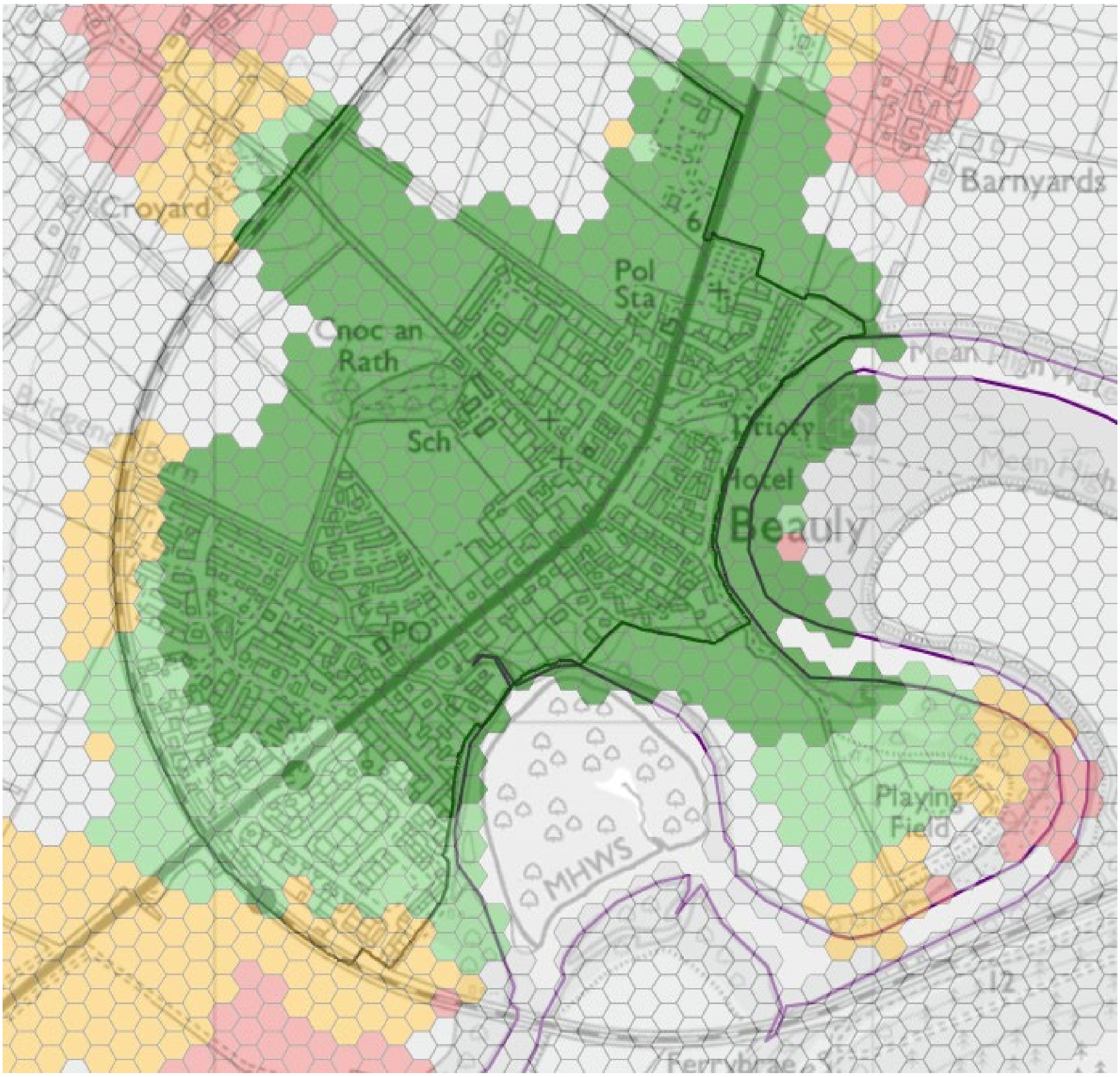
		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties						Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Row Labels	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Total	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
SDA	Ardersier	392	196	643	8214.4	12.8	13.6	3.28	577	46	20	0	0	643	89.7%	7.2%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Beauly	667	251	760	9912.4	13.0	14.4	3.03	615	117	28	0	0	760	80.9%	15.4%	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Croy	260	121	299	2591.6	8.7	8.8	2.47	0	299	0	0	0	299	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Dores	159	42	75	474.4	6.3	6.6	1.79	0	0	75	0	0	75	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Drumnadrochit	994	282	600	5764.8	9.6	14.4	2.13	232	225	104	39	0	600	38.7%	37.5%	17.3%	6.5%	0.0%
SDA	Fort Augustus	689	183	356	4091.2	11.5	14.6	1.95	194	97	50	15	0	356	54.5%	27.2%	14.0%	4.2%	0.0%
SDA	Kiltarlity	296	95	261	2123.6	8.1	9.8	2.75	0	130	131	0	0	261	0.0%	49.8%	50.2%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Kirkhill	408	194	407	3176.8	7.8	8.4	2.10	0	327	78	2	0	407	0.0%	80.3%	19.2%	0.5%	0.0%
SDA	Tomatin	547	84	135	989.6	7.3	9.8	1.61	0	75	18	42	0	135	0.0%	55.6%	13.3%	31.1%	0.0%
SDA	Tornagrain	1487	98	309	2524.6	8.2	8.4	3.15	0	295	8	2	4	309	0.0%	95.5%	2.6%	0.6%	1.3%
SDA	South Inverness	8560	3777	12908	117621	9.1	14.4	3.42	2221	6628	3528	495	36	12908	17.2%	51.3%	27.3%	3.8%	0.3%
SDA	West Inverness	5249	2204	9826	110647	11.3	15.6	4.46	5156	2959	1368	343	0	9826	52.5%	30.1%	13.9%	3.5%	0.0%
SDA	East Inverness	5768	2069	6574	56081.2	8.5	14.6	3.18	1272	2085	3083	132	2	6574	19.3%	31.7%	46.9%	2.0%	0.0%
SDA	Central Inverness	3672	825	3369	41579.2	12.3	15.6	4.08	2315	707	326	21	0	3369	68.7%	21.0%	9.7%	0.6%	0.0%
Aggregation	**Inverness SDA**	**23249**	**8875**	**32677**	**325928.4**	**10.0**	**15.6**	**3.68**	**10964**	**12379**	**8305**	**991**	**38**	**32677**	**33.6%**	**37.9%**	**25.4%**	**3.0%**	**0.1%**
GS	Foyers	2779	64	120	823.8	6.9	9.4	1.88	0	26	88	4	2	120	0.0%	21.7%	73.3%	3.3%	1.7%
GS	Cannich	1436	81	116	1027.8	8.9	10.2	1.43	0	98	14	3	1	116	0.0%	84.5%	12.1%	2.6%	0.9%
GS	Farr and Inverarnie	3842	117	141	676.2	4.8	8.4	1.21	0	3	100	34	4	141	0.0%	2.1%	70.9%	24.1%	2.8%
GS	Whitebridge	12416	66	73	132.6	1.8	3.4	1.11	0	0	0	40	33	73	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	54.8%	45.2%
GS	Balnain	3487	107	125	409.4	3.3	6.2	1.17	0	0	54	16	55	125	0.0%	0.0%	43.2%	12.8%	44.0%
GS	Gorthleck	3710	69	78	333.4	4.3	7.2	1.13	0	0	46	7	25	78	0.0%	0.0%	59.0%	9.0%	32.1%
GS	Abriachan	2562	40	45	89.2	2.0	2.8	1.13	0	0	0	29	16	45	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	64.4%	35.6%
GS	Inchmore	498	46	61	188.2	3.1	3.4	1.33	0	0	0	53	8	61	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	86.9%	13.1%
GS	Tomich	1479	41	50	163	3.3	4	1.22	0	0	28	18	4	50	0.0%	0.0%	56.0%	36.0%	8.0%
	Grand Total - All Cttee Area	**61357**	**11052**	**37331**	**369635.4**	**9.9**	**15.6**	**3.4**	**12582**	**14117**	**9147**	**1295**	**190**	**37331**	**33.7%**	**37.8%**	**24.5%**	**3.5%**	**0.5%**

Full details via [Local Living Mapping (arcgis.com)]() and in Appendix

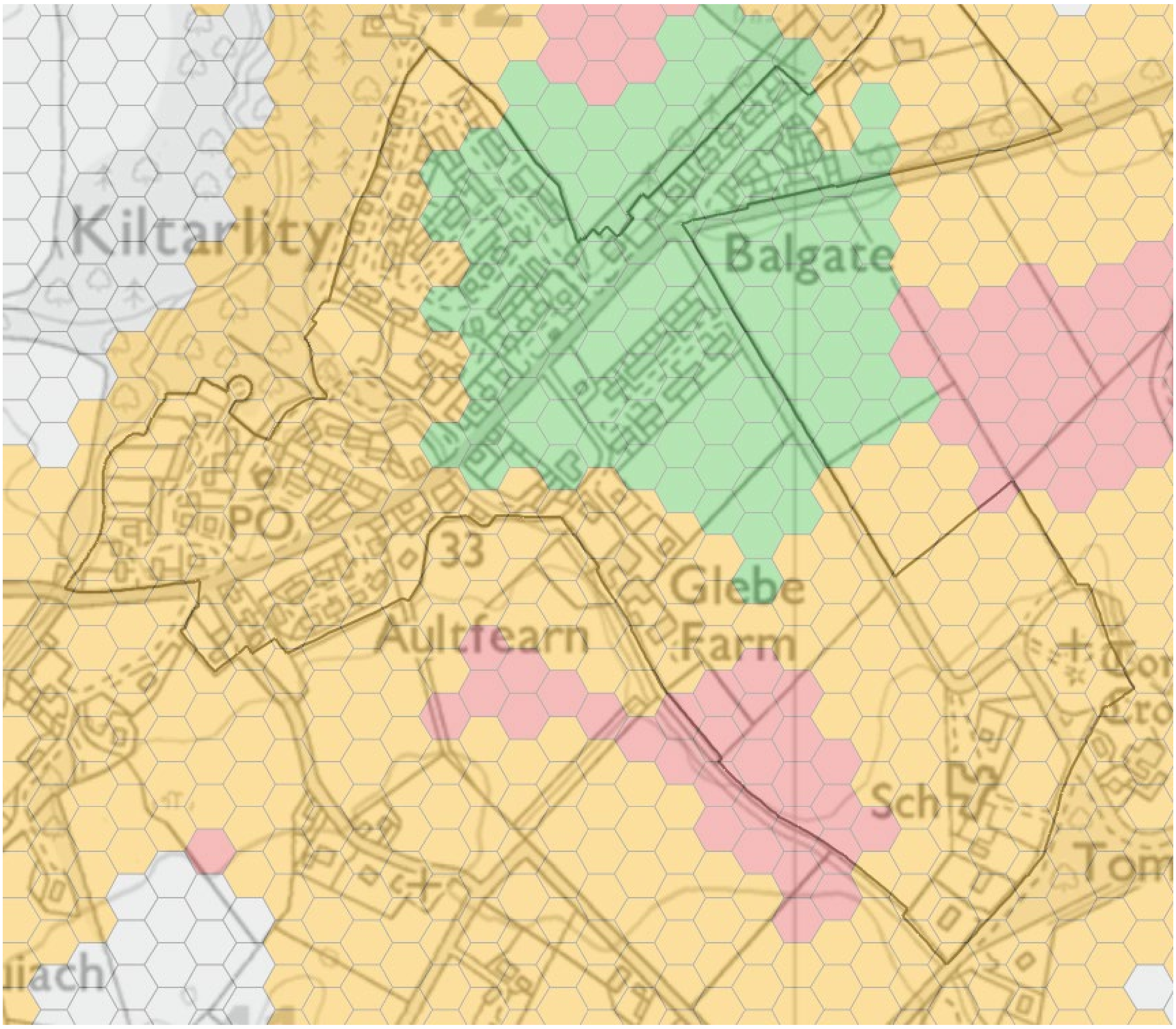
City of Inverness Area Profile

Appendix – Local Living Outcomes Maps for Main Settlements

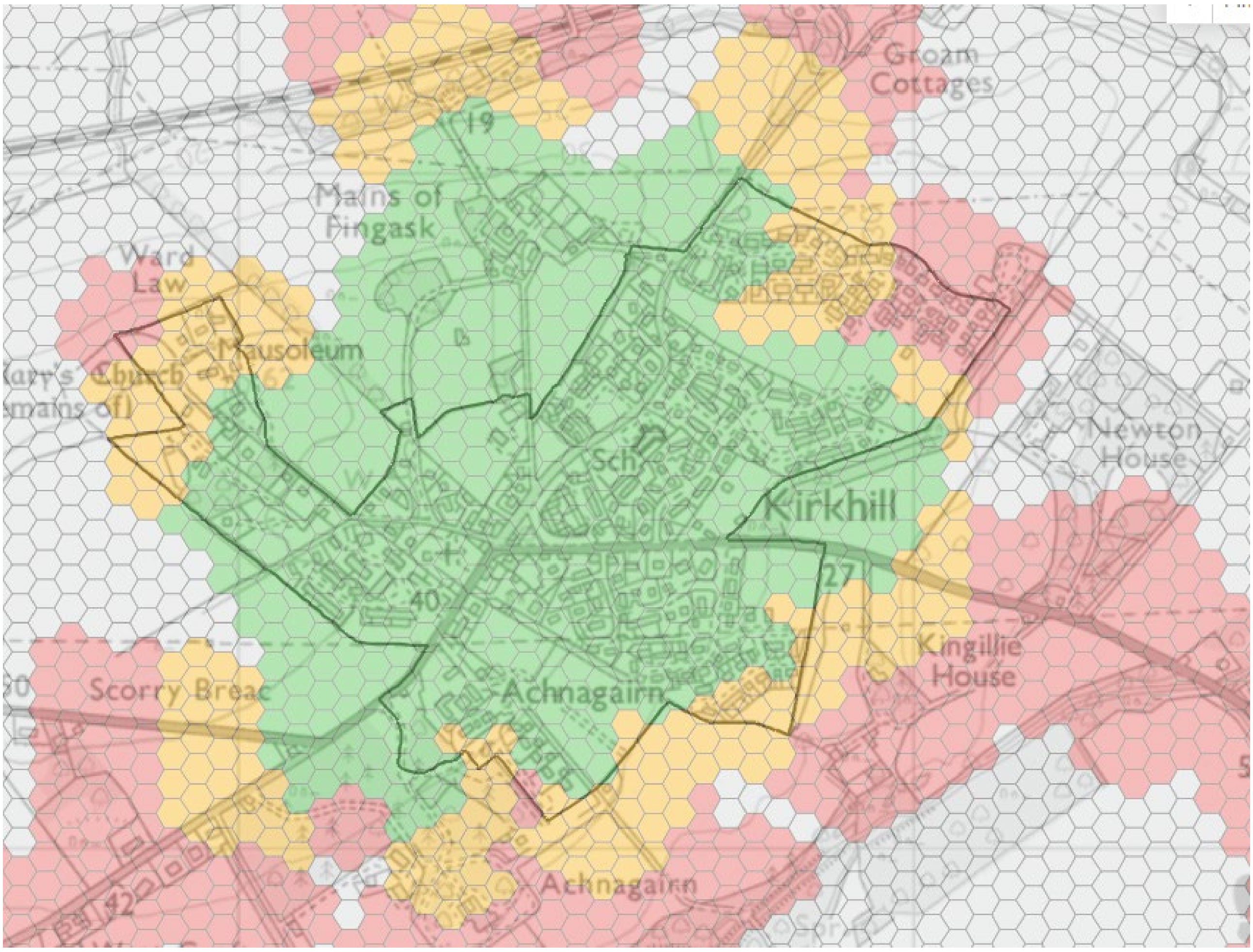




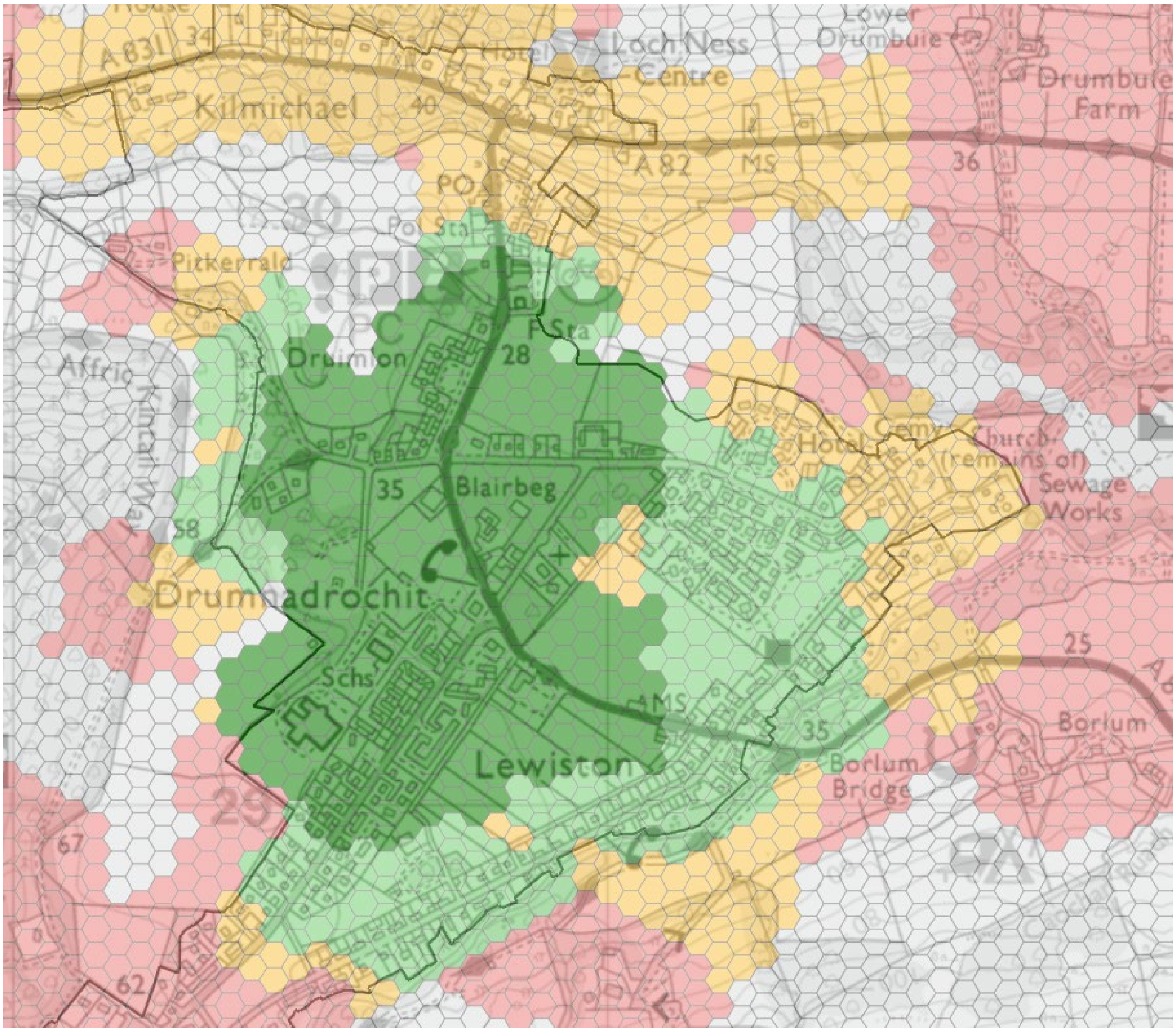
Croyard
Barnyards
Pol
Sta
Cnoc an
Rath
Sch
Hotel
Beauly
PO
Playing
Field
MHWS
Ferrybrae

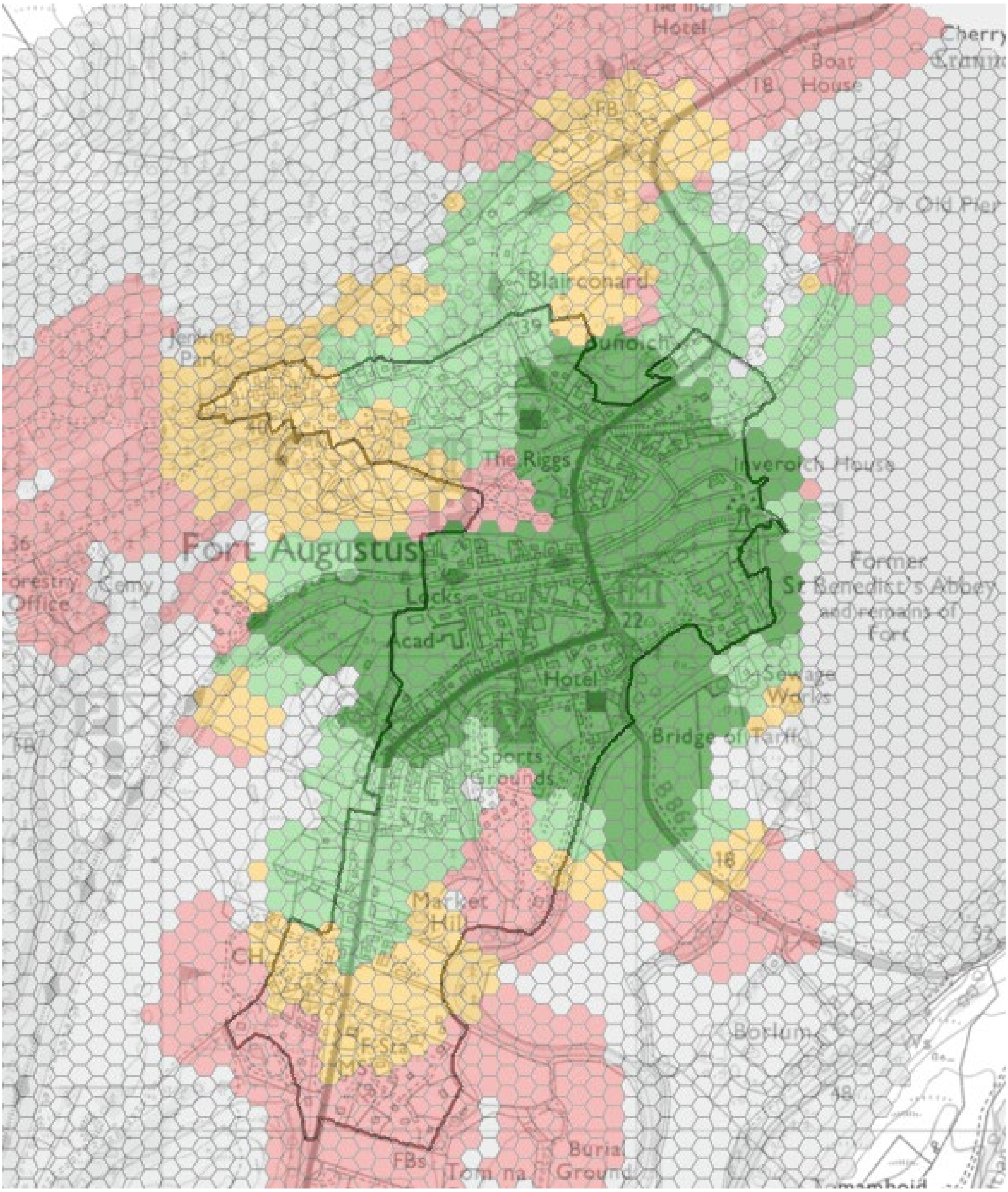

Kiltarlity
Balgate
PO
33
Glebe
Farm
Aultfearn
Sch

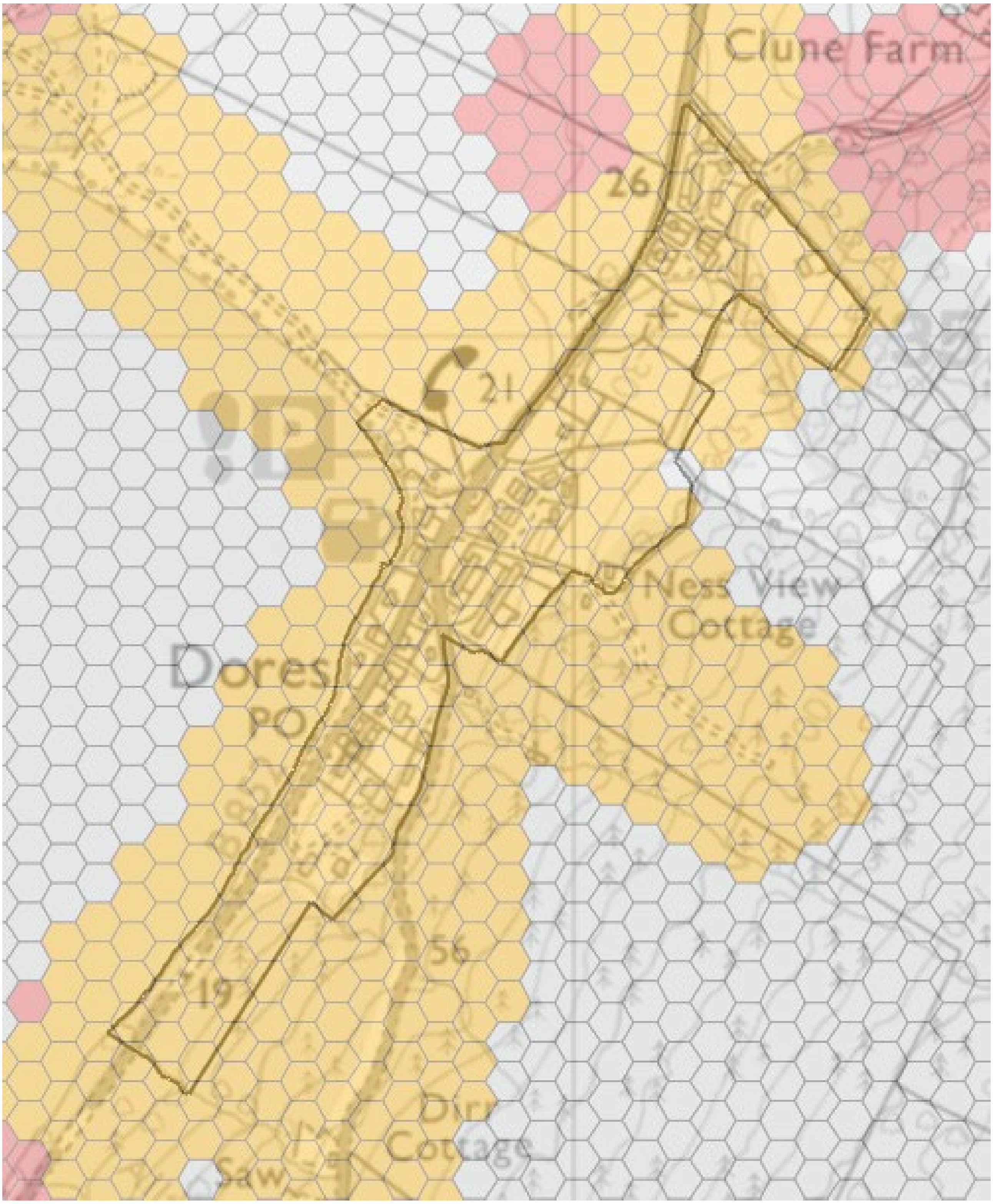
City of Inverness Area Profile

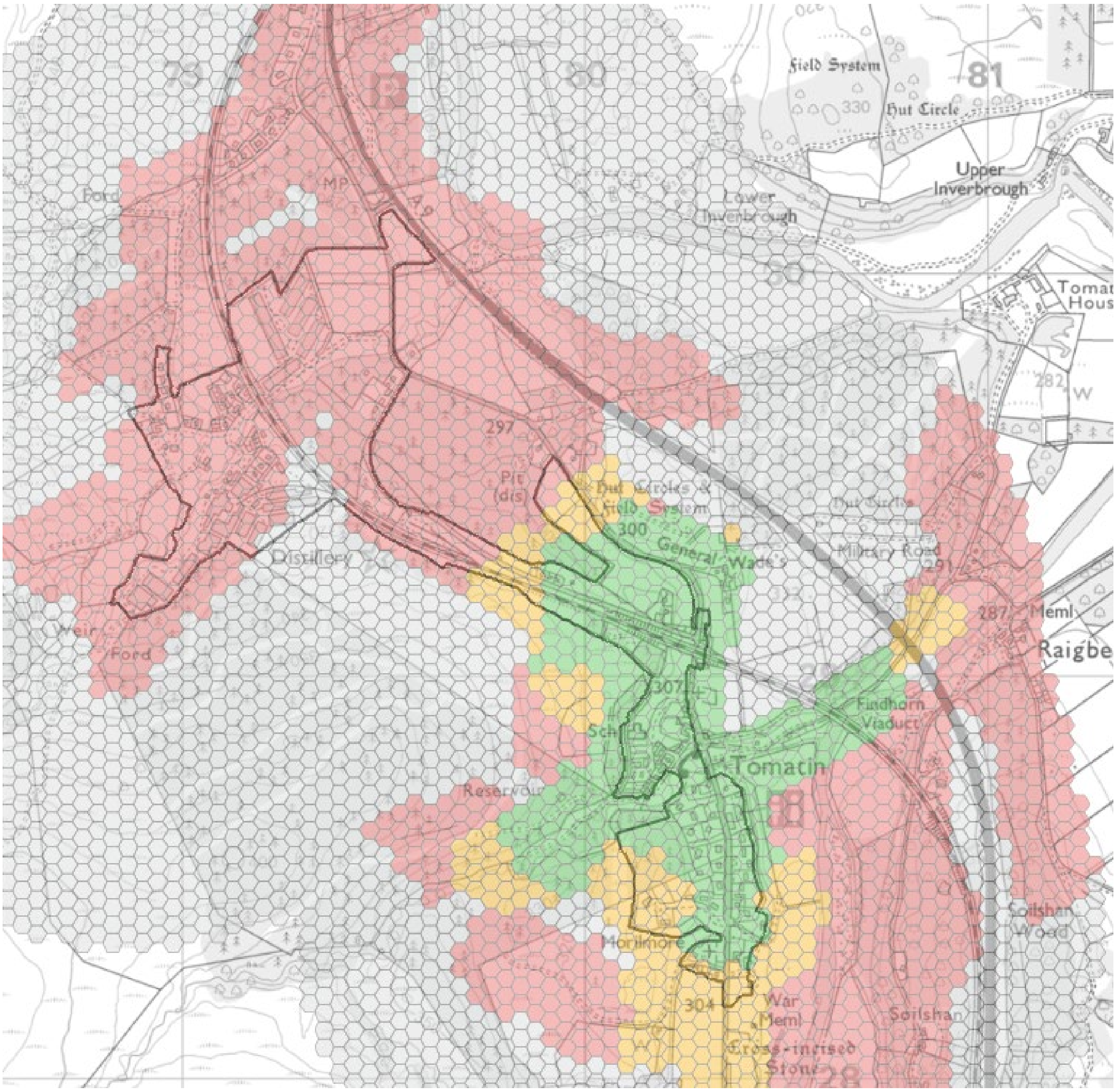


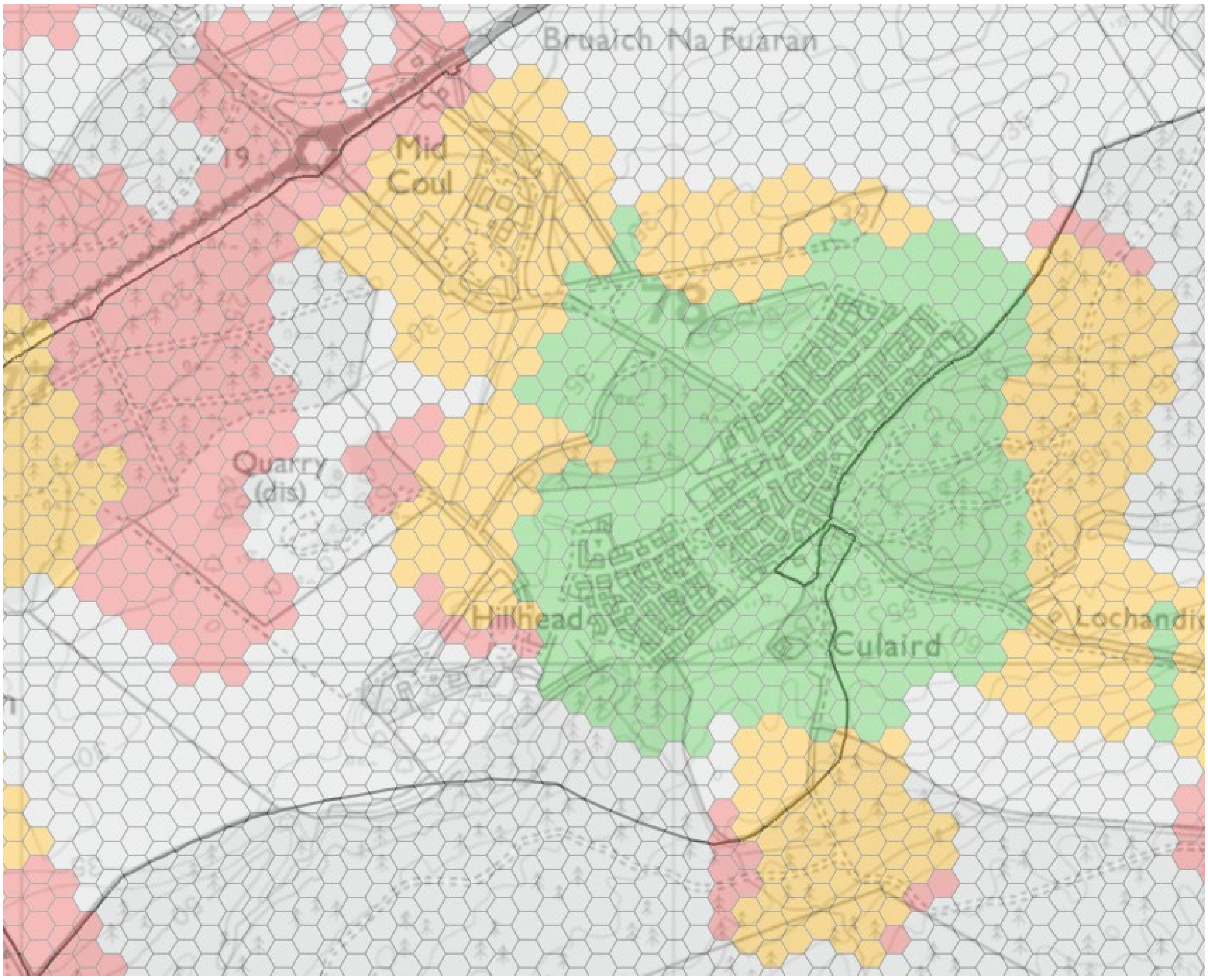
City of Inverness Area Profile

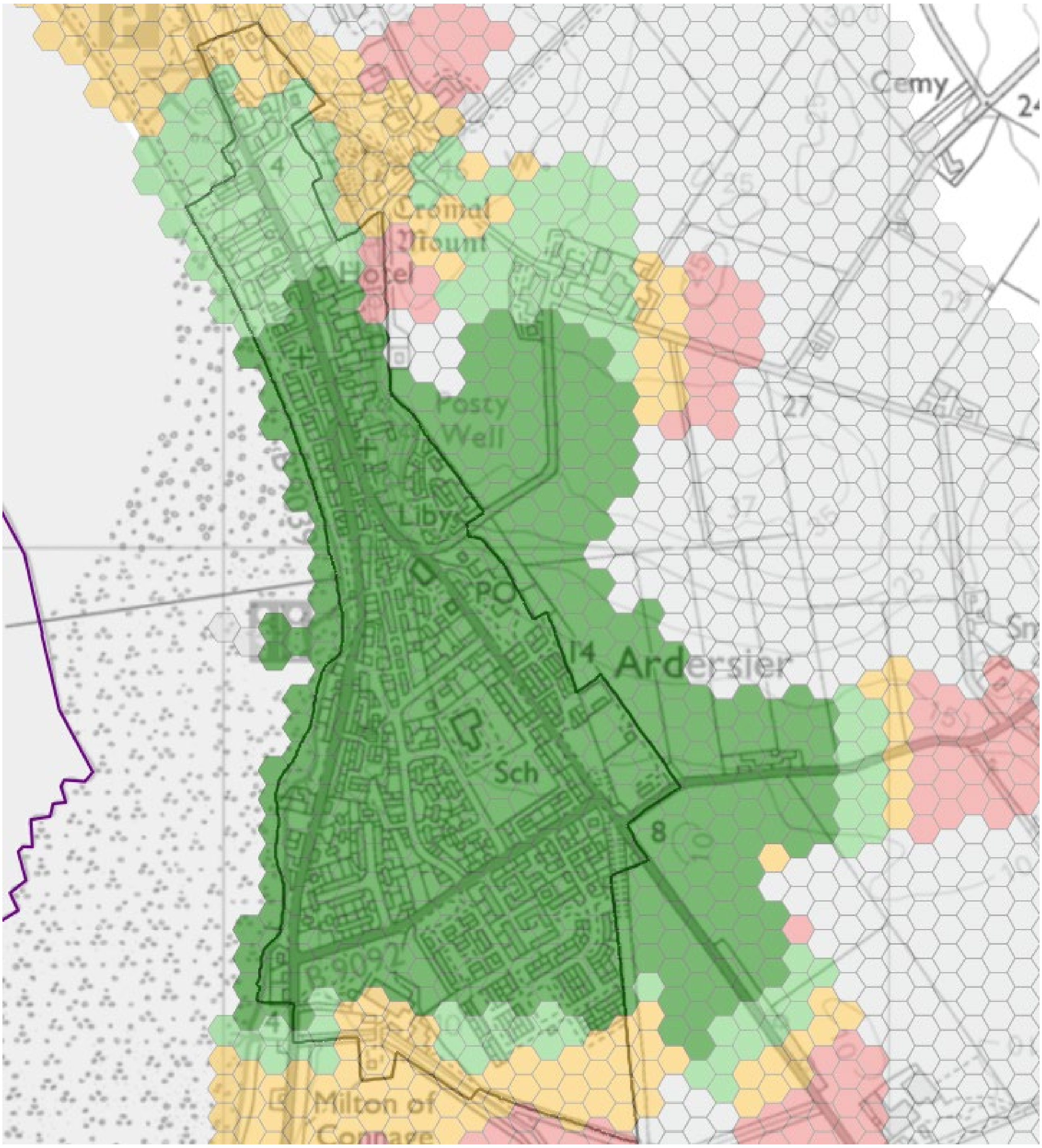



Hotel
Cherry
Boat
House
FB
Old Pier
Blairconnard
Jenkins
Park
Bunoich
The Riggs
Inveroich House
Fort Augustus
Former
St Benedict's Abbey
and remains of
Fort
Forestry
Office
Cemy
Locks
Acad
Hotel
Sewage
Works
Bridge of Tarff
Sports
Grounds
Market
Hill
CH
Borlum
F Sta
Burial
Ground
FBs
Tom na
18
22
39
36
48


Clune Farm
26
21
Ness View
Cottage
Dores
PO
56
19
Dir
Cottage
Saw

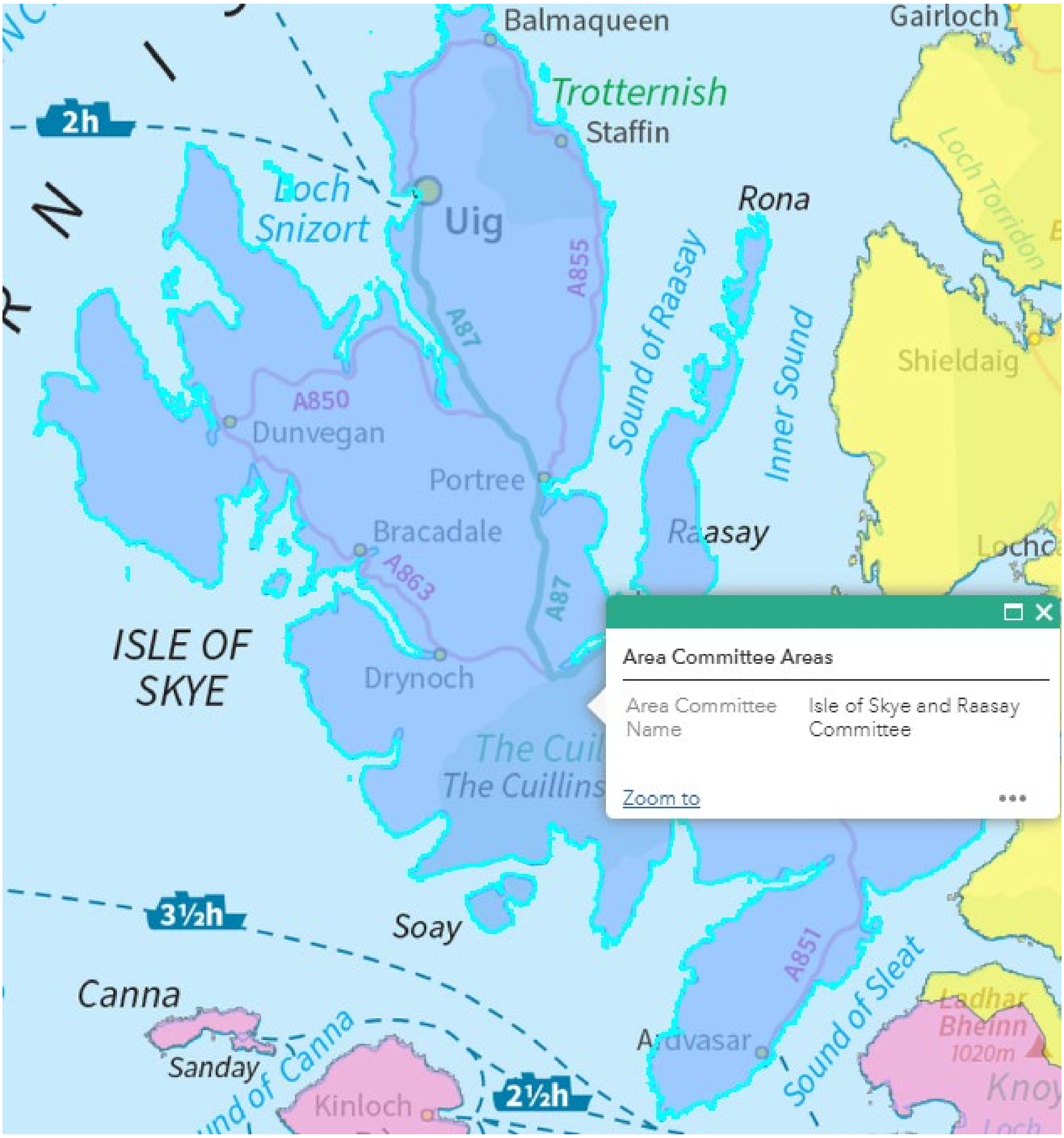

Field System
81
330
Hut Circle
Upper
Inverbrough
Lower
Inverbrough
Tomat
Hous
282
MP
A9
Ford
297
Pit
(dis)
Hut Circles &
Field System
300
General Wade's
Military Road
291
287
Meml
Raigbe
Distillery
Weir
Ford
307
Findhorn
Viaduct
Tomatin
Reservoir
Soilshan
Wood
Morlmore
304
War
Meml
Soilshan
Cross-incised
Stone


Bruaich Na Fuaran
Mid
Coul
Quarry
(dis)
Hillhead
Culaird
Lochandi


Cemy
Hotel
Posty Well
Liby
PO
Ardersier
Sch
B9092
Milton of

Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Profile

1 Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements are (Main settlements defined in the West Highland & Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan) by order within the hierarchy) Broadford, Dunvegan, Kyleakin, Portree, Sleat, Staffin, and Uig. Portree is the island capital.

The Isle of Skye and Raasay Area is an iconic visitor destination in its own right not just part of the wider Highlands offer. Tourists are attracted by its outstanding natural and cultural heritage. However, only 16% of the land area is easy to develop due to this heritage and other physical and servicing constraints. As a result, settlement is concentrated on the coast and/or where marginally more productive agricultural land is available. Even within existing settlements, crofting tenure and the need to safeguard the better inbye land limit where future growth should and could occur.

More positively, island status has justified better locally based services and facilities than would otherwise be present (within other similarly remote and not populous parts of Highland) for the local population catchment. High and increasing visitor numbers too are a positive and a negative. For example, the level of visitor spend makes it commercially viable to have greater supermarket provision on Skye that would otherwise be present. However, those visitors also have unwelcome infrastructure network impacts. The Area is also a through route to/from other Hebridean islands which supports economic, social and cultural connections.

3 How well does the Area function?

The Area's key characteristic is the extent and quality of its natural and cultural heritage. As stated above this is both an advantage and a disadvantage. That heritage is important in species, habitats, visual, and tourism economy terms but also restricts future development potential. Accordingly, development pressure is directed to the 16% of developable land which can undermine the aim of preserving inbye croft land, safeguarding built heritage (for example within the conservation areas of Stein and Portree), and preventing sporadic housing development in the open countryside. Many of the heritage resources also overlap the coast and constrain aquaculture and harbour related development and the employment they can provide. A tension remains about whether the Area should rely upon public sector and tourism jobs or diversify into energy related and other industrial development.

The lack of diverse local employment opportunities but improvements in digital connectivity has led to higher home working but also higher emission longer distance. Innovative solutions are required to reduce unnecessary travel. Electric vehicle car clubs, online shopping and deliver hubs, digital healthcare, and community transport schemes are all possible solutions. Both the UK and Scottish Governments have agreed to fund far better digital connectivity to the Area and therefore the range of online solutions will increase.

4 "Infrastructure First" Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within Isle of Skye & Raasay there are 7,770 premises 2,083 (27%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 4,592 (59%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 1,095 (14%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities** - there are no current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints in the mainstream schools in this area – full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024.
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** – all main settlements have water treatment works capacity issues apart from Kyleakin – there is sewage works capacity at Dunvegan, Portree, Broadford and Kyleakin but not on Raasay or at Uig, Staffin and Sleat – all main settlements have network capacity issues for both water and sewerage.
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments** – many journeys within the Area are of limited mode choice, lengthy, expensive and unreliable – the Portree Link Road is programmed, will open up development potential but is still to be completed – active travel network improvements are required within all communities and between communities for example the Skye Cycle Way – there is strong seasonal range in traffic flows but the annual average daily flow on most key tourist routes such as the A87 is increasing tear on year (Broadford 5,636 vehicles/day, Portree 3,806) - there are local concerns about road surface, bridge and winter condition of the trunk and local road network particularly because many roads are lifeline connections to remote rural communities with no practicable alternative route – several roads are still single track or have single track sections, which are not designed to withstand the impact of the larger vehicle tourist and other traffic that now travels along them.
- **Other Significant Transport Constraints & Investments** – there has been recent and significant improvement to the harbour at Uig including a new terminal building which should increase its throughput and economic potential. There remains the possibility of resurrecting scheduled air services to Skye via improvements to Ashaig Airstrip although no funding is committed at present.
- **Health Facility Capacity** – during 2022/23 Broadford Hospital had a 97.8% record of seeing A&E patients within 4 hours and Portree Hospital a 99.5% record – 5 GP practices cover the Area based at Kyle of Lochalsh, Carbost, Dunvegan, Portree and Broadford – all practices have a patients per GP ratio below the Highland average of 770.

Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Profile

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 10,686 (4.5% of Highland population).
- **Population Change** - (Census 2011-2022) +4.8% population loss compared to Scotland and Highland growth (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%).
- **Age profile** (Census 2022) 0-16 (14.5%) 65+ (27.6%) (lower proportion of young and higher proportion of old than Highland and Scotland averages) – falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023.
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** (Council Tax Data 2023) 45.8%.
- **Households** – (Census 2022) 5,255 occupied households.
- **House Completions** - long term average of 92 per year which is 7.8% of the Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e.
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Area has a higher (12%) proportion than Highland (10%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating but a much higher (23%) proportion than Highland (13%) with the worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights that most main settlements within the Area demonstrate levels of deprivation in line with the national average but there are pockets of mild deprivation within Broadford, Portree, Staffin, and the crofting settlements of north west Skye - full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/.
- **Visitors to Highland** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK – most (75%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – half stayed in serviced accommodation – hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities.
- **Earnings** – (the Area is made up of part of the Broadford & Kyle of Lochalsh and all of the Portree Travel to Work Areas [TTWAs]) – 2023 data indicated within the Broadford & Kyle of Lochalsh TTWA gross average weekly full time pay of £565.30 and within the Portree TTWA £828.20.
- **Working from Home & Commuting** – (Ward data from Census 2022) – 36.4% of the workforce work mainly from home (higher than Highland and Scotland averages) and 39.2% commute more than 10km to work (higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- **Unemployment** – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active.
- **Employment sectors** – (2020 HIE data for Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross area) the top 3 employment sectors are: human health and social work (12.5%), wholesale and retail (12.8%) and accommodation and food services (25.0%).
- **Environmental and other constraints** - 84% of the Area is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Local Place Plan details via
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
Broadford and Strath – Your Place, Your Plan – details via
https://www.broadfordandstrath.org/project/local-place-plan/

In Preparation
Plana Àite Ionadail Shlèite/Local Place Plan for Sleat
Uig Local Place Plan

Other Plans
'Skye and Raasay Future – Investment for People and Place' is an Area-wide Place Plan (APP) prepared in collaboration across key community stakeholders and agencies. The plan collates an overview of local priorities development, investment and service delivery across the area - identified through stakeholder and community engagement, in addition to reviewing the content of existing plans and strategies across public and community partners. The APP will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

Details via:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/283/community_life_and_leisure/960/skye_and_raasay_investment_plan

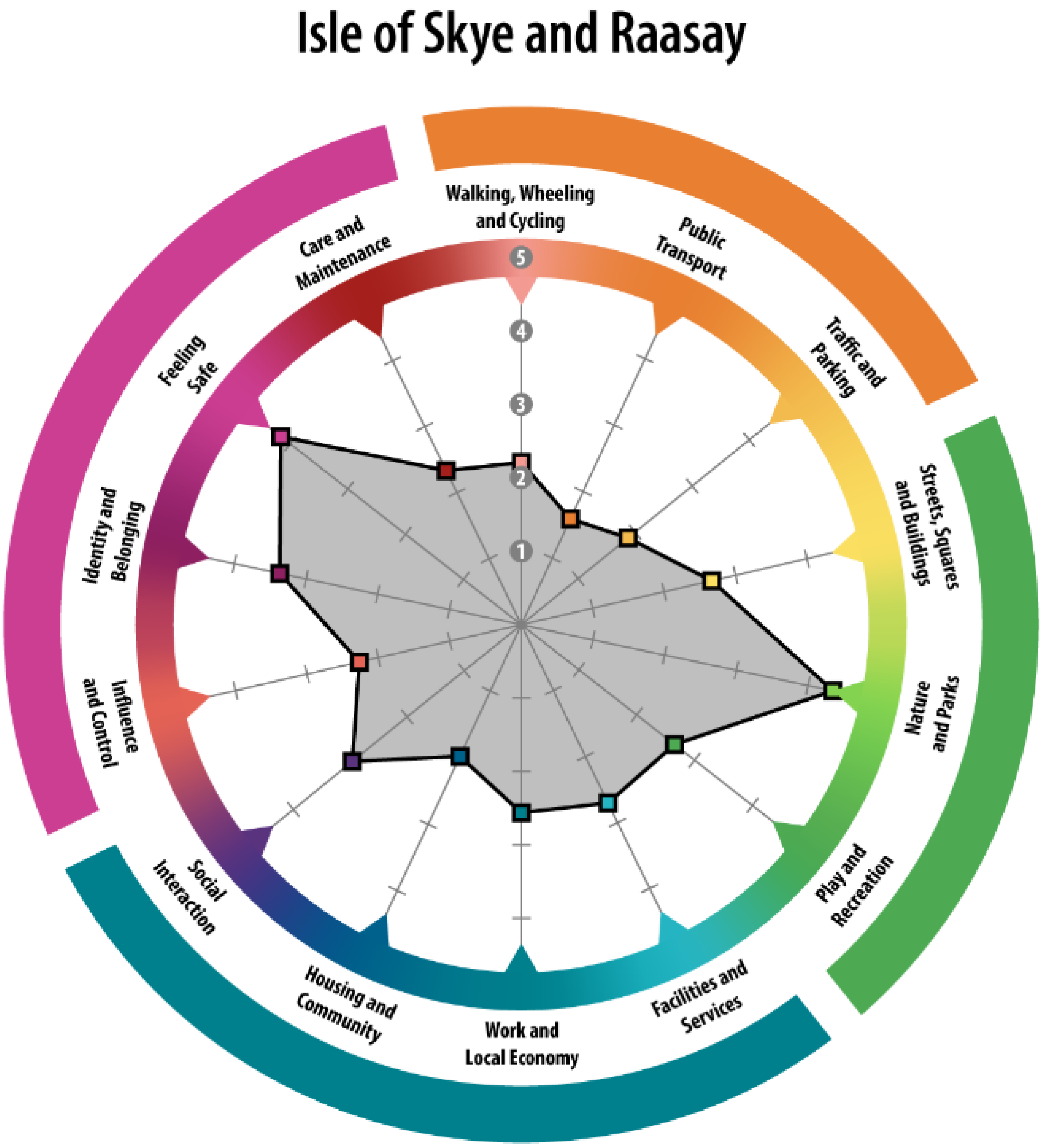
Community Partnership Plan
Skye, Lochalsh & Wester Ross Community Partnership has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive, the CP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area.

The Community Partnership has not prepared a Locality Plan for this Area but has endorsed several community action/development plans – details via
https://highlandcpp.org.uk/community-partnerships/skye-lochalsh-west-ross-community-partnership/.

Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Profile

6 Place Standard

Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).



Skye & Raasay Area Average Score (2.7) is joint-lowest among sub-regional areas of Highland.

Response rate for the Place Standard Survey: 65 online responses, plus 10 young people involved in HLH facilitated engagement sessions.

Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Profile

Highest scores for area: *Nature & Parks* (4.4); *Feeling Safe* (4.3); *Identity & Belonging (Pride in Place)* (3.4).

Lowest scores for area: *Public Transport* (1.6); *Traffic & Parking* (1.9); *Housing & Community* (2.0); *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.1)

Domains for which Skye & Raasay compares well with rest of Highland:

- *Feeling Safe* (4.3) scored highest in Highland.
- *Nature & Parks* (4.4) scored joint-third highest in Highland.

Domains for which Skye & Raasay scores low compared with rest of Highland:

- Across the movement category, *Public Transport* (1.6), *Traffic & Parking* (1.9) and *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.1) each scored lowest in Highland.
- *Housing & Community* (2.0) scored lowest in Highland.
- *Influence & Sense of Control* (2.3) scored lowest in Highland.

Qualitative Feedback

- Desire for segregated walking and cycling paths away from road traffic to enable the health benefits of connection to nature and the outdoors – addressing concerns over poor road conditions, road safety relating to tourist traffic and insufficiency of pavements.
- Direct bus routes to major destinations and ferry services are valued, but there is strong demand for more frequent services that are better integrated with ferry schedules and enhanced connections for remote communities. There is demand for an operational airport and improvements in the ferry service's reliability and accessibility.
- New parking developments in Portree are appreciated. However, parking availability and traffic management remain major concerns during the tourist season. There are demands for improved road signage, restrictions on tourist vehicles and local reinvestment of parking revenues.
- Calls for more greenery and pedestrian friendly spaces in Portree Square.
- Concern over the impact of proposed windfarms and associated infrastructure, alongside a perception that the local community has little influence. Calls for locally-led, community owned renewable energy projects.
- Calls for community involvement in planning and upkeep of playparks; including provision of outdoor play targeted at older children and improved indoor facilities to enable socialising during poor weather and dark winters.
- Demand for increased availability of year-round social spaces – feedback indicates many venues close outside of tourist season, Suggestions include supporting local organisations to create more community hubs to reduce social isolation.
- Regular mention of need for enhanced healthcare, particularly dental services and emergency care, including better transport links to access these services.
- Local retail options are regarded as limited and expensive.
- Increased support for apprenticeships and availability of affordable housing are regarded as integral to diversifying the local economy, as well as attracting and retaining workers currently deterred by high costs and lack of rental availability.

- Demands for increased public investment in litter and waste management associated with tourism.

Youth concerns arising from HLH workshops (youth feedback was less detailed compared to that arising in other areas):

- Investment of parking revenues in local maintenance and facilities.
- Prioritisation of housing for local residents working in the area.
- Concern over road safety during peak tourist season.
- Availability of public transport.
- Access to facilities.

7 Local Living Outcomes

In the area of the **Isle of Skye and Raasay Area** we surveyed **42078** Hex Cells - **11742** fall within Settlement Development Areas (SDAs) or the area of Growing Settlements – of these **1447** Cells contain the **2791** Residential properties in the Area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells:

72.1% of residential properties are cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (893)** or **Highly Walkable (1119)**

13.6% of residential properties (381) have **Few or No Walkable services**

The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in **Isle of Skye and Raasay Area** Is **9.6** (out of a maximum possible of 16)

Portree SDA has the highest average residential score (at **11.7** per property)

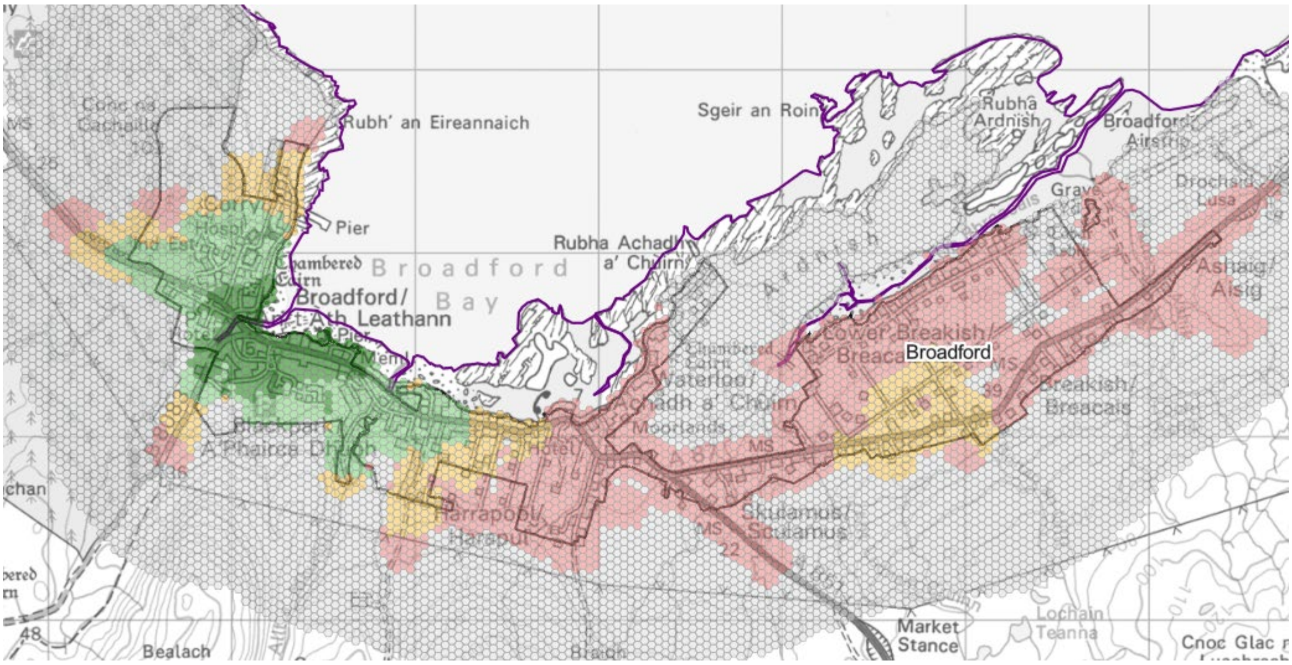
Edinbane Growing Settlement has the lowest average residential property score with an average of **5.6**

		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties						Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Name	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Tota	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
GS	Edinbane	1805	61	79	440.6	5.6	7.2	1.30	0	0	49	30	0	79	0.0%	0.0%	62.0%	38.0%	0.0%
SDA	Broadford	2581	404	646	5023.2	7.8	14.6	1.60	129	217	88	187	25	646	20.0%	33.6%	13.6%	28.9%	3.9%
GS	Carbost	377	44	63	557	8.8	9.6	1.43	0	55	4	3	1	63	0.0%	87.3%	6.3%	4.8%	1.6%
SDA	Dunvegan, Kilmuir and Lonemore	1563	118	166	1324.6	8.0	13.8	1.41	21	82	57	4	2	166	12.7%	49.4%	34.3%	2.4%	1.2%
GS	Inverarish	1181	52	112	1101.4	9.8	10.8	2.15	0	98	13	1	0	112	0.0%	87.5%	11.6%	0.9%	0.0%
SDA	Kilbeg	226	5	6	41.2	6.9	7.2	1.20	0	0	6	0	0	6	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Kyleakin	537	98	231	1942	8.4	9.2	2.36	0	187	35	9	0	231	0.0%	81.0%	15.2%	3.9%	0.0%
SDA	Portree	2255	511	1264	14828.6	11.7	16	2.47	743	362	86	73	0	1264	58.8%	28.6%	6.8%	5.8%	0.0%
SDA	Staffin	448	61	94	759.6	8.1	10.6	1.54	0	60	8	23	3	94	0.0%	63.8%	8.5%	24.5%	3.2%
SDA	Uig	769	93	130	839.4	6.5	8.2	1.40	0	58	52	17	3	130	0.0%	44.6%	40.0%	13.1%	2.3%
		11742	**1447**	**2791**	**26857.6**	**9.6**	**16**	**1.93**	**893**	**1119**	**398**	**347**	**34**	**2791**	**32.0%**	**40.1%**	**14.3%**	**12.4%**	**1.2%**

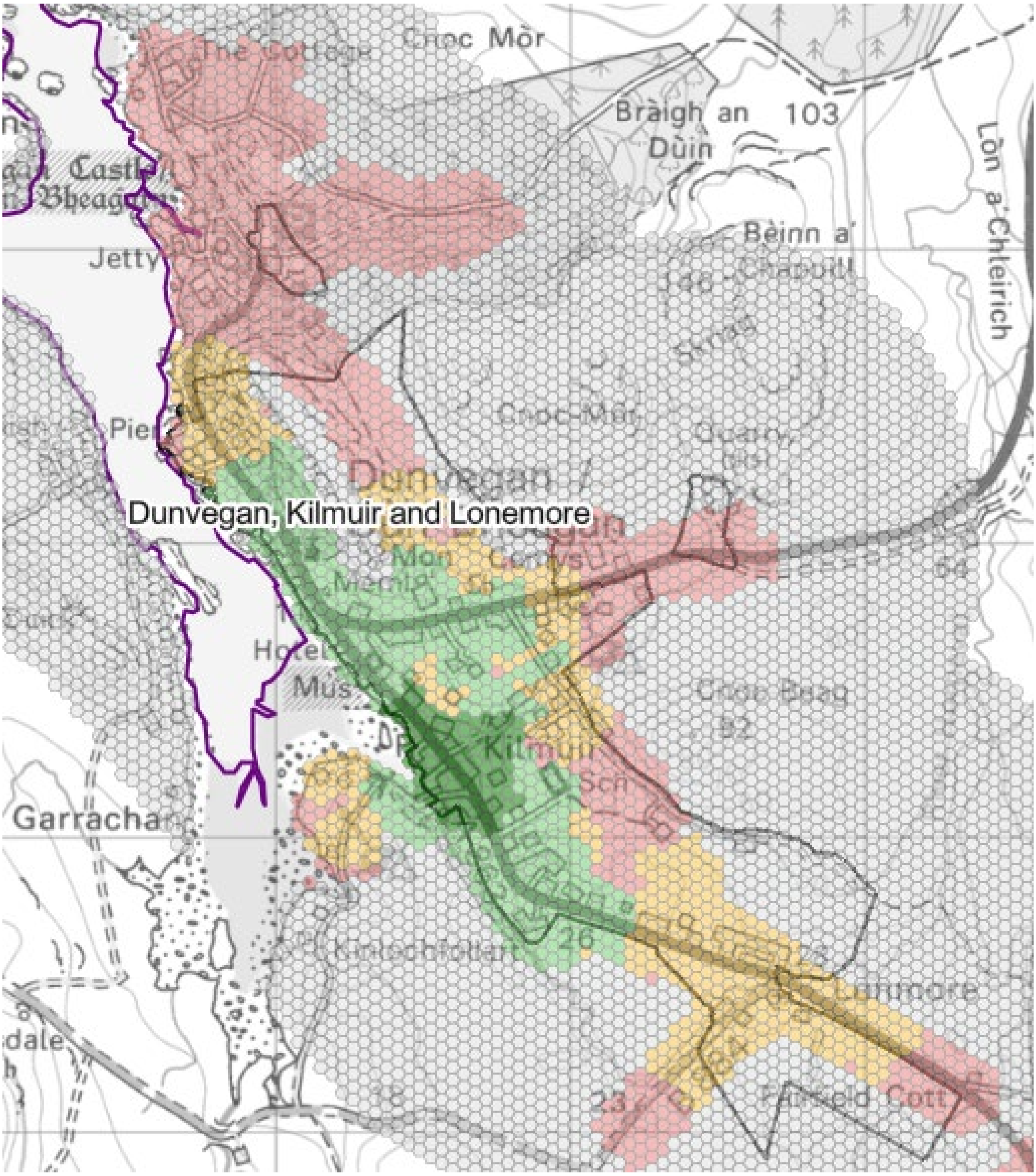
Full details via [Local Living Mapping (arcgis.com)]()

Appendix – Local Living Outcomes Maps for Main Settlements

Broadford

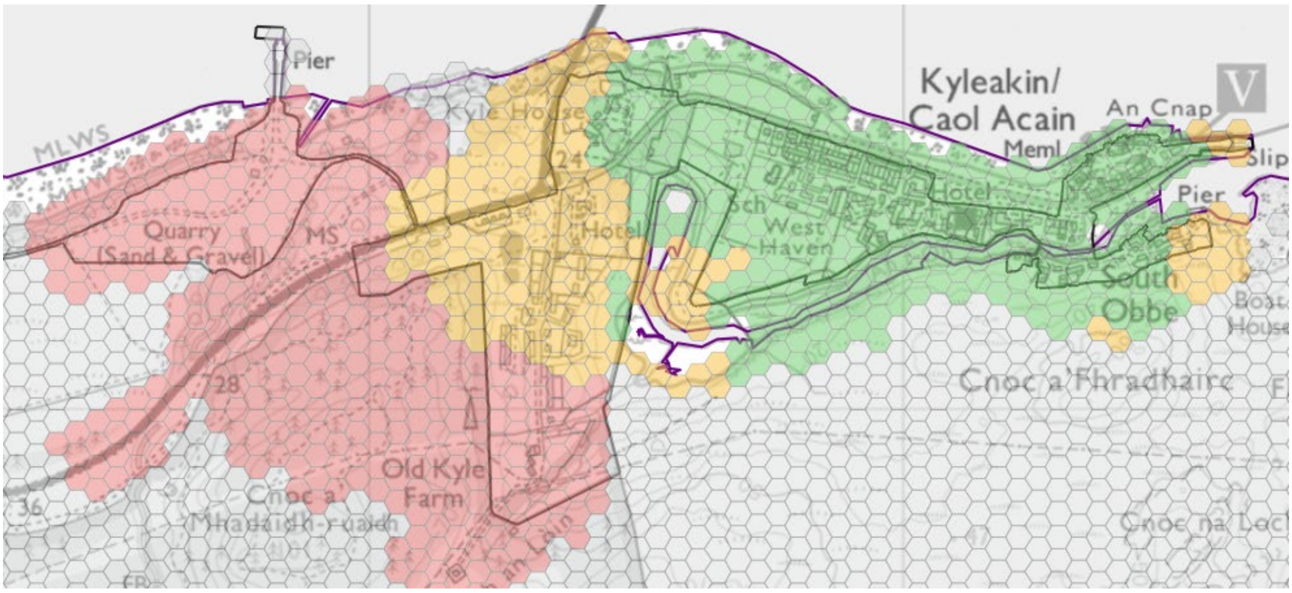


Dunvegan

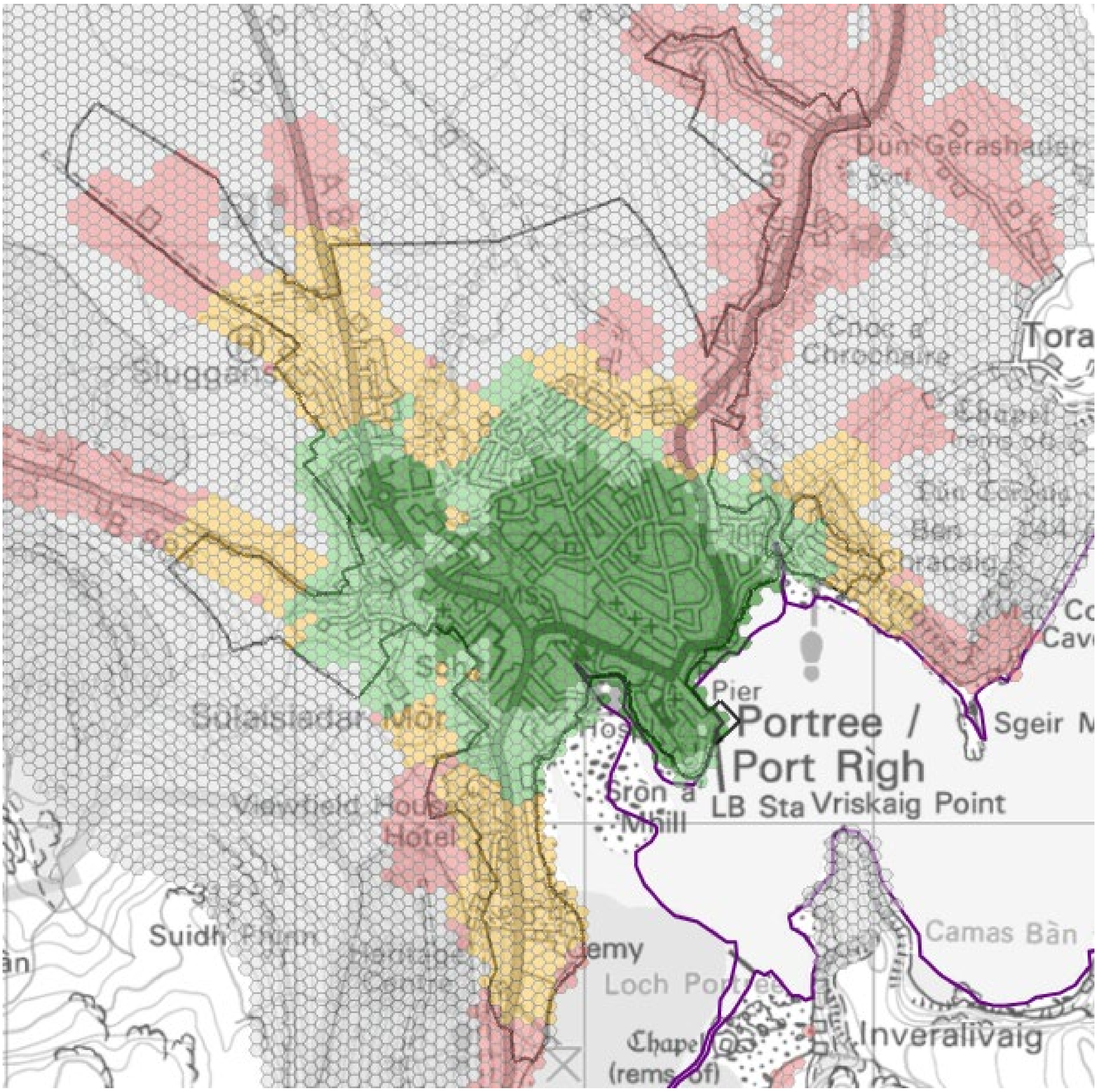

Cnoc Mòr
Bràigh an Dùin
103
Lòn a' Chleirich
Bèinn a' Chapuill
Jetty
Pier
Cnoc Mòr
Dunvegan, Kilmuir and Lonemore
Hotel
Mus
Kilmuir
Cnoc Beag
82
Garrachan
Kinlochfollart
26
Lonmore
Fairfield Cott
18
dale

Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Profile

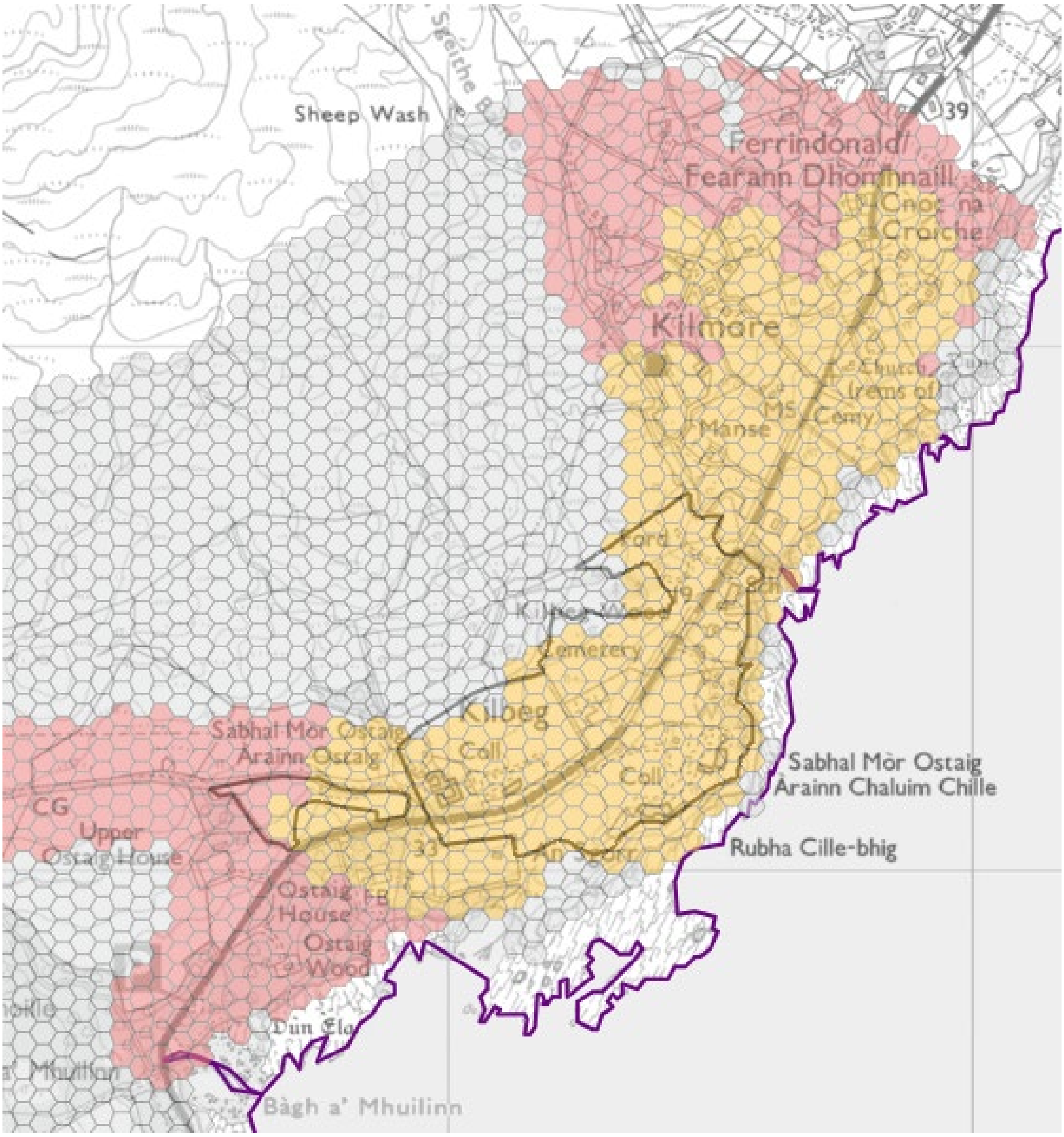
Kyleakin



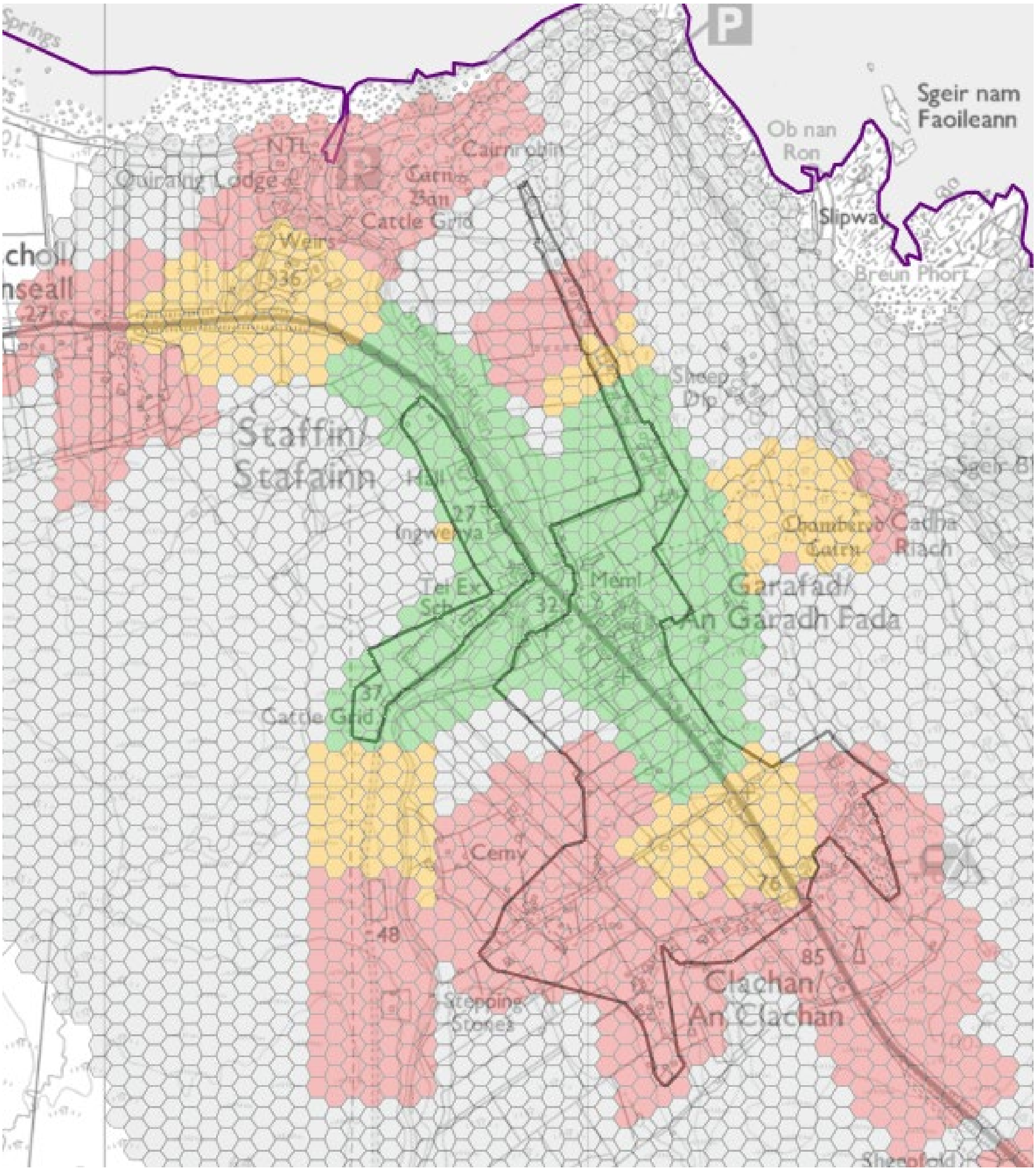
Portree


Dùn Gerashader
Tora
Sluggans
Pier
Portree / Port Rìgh
Sgeir
LB Sta
Vriskaig Point
Camas Bàn
Suidh
Loch Portree
Chapel
(rems of)
Inveralivaig
Hotel

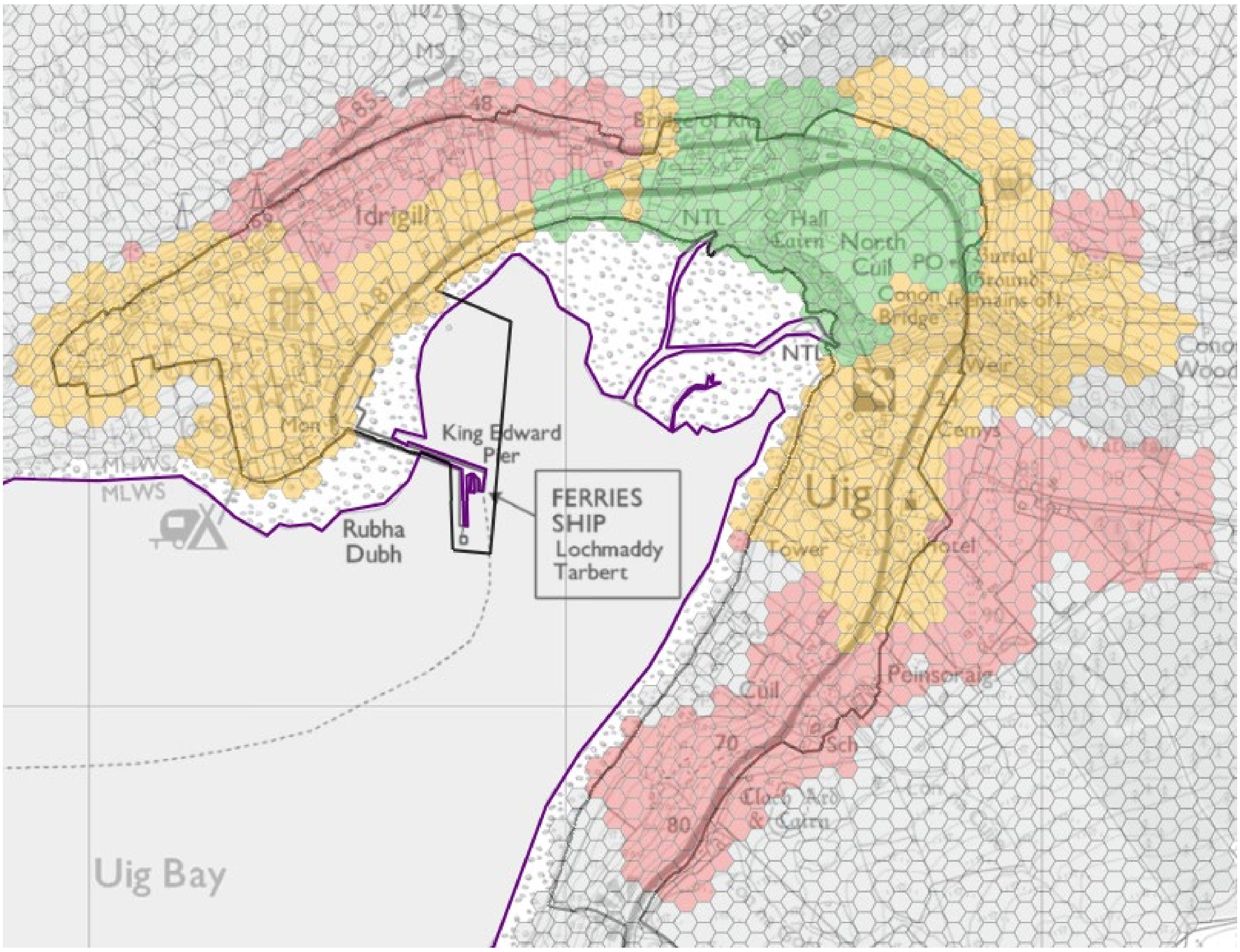
Sleat (Kilbeg)



Staffin

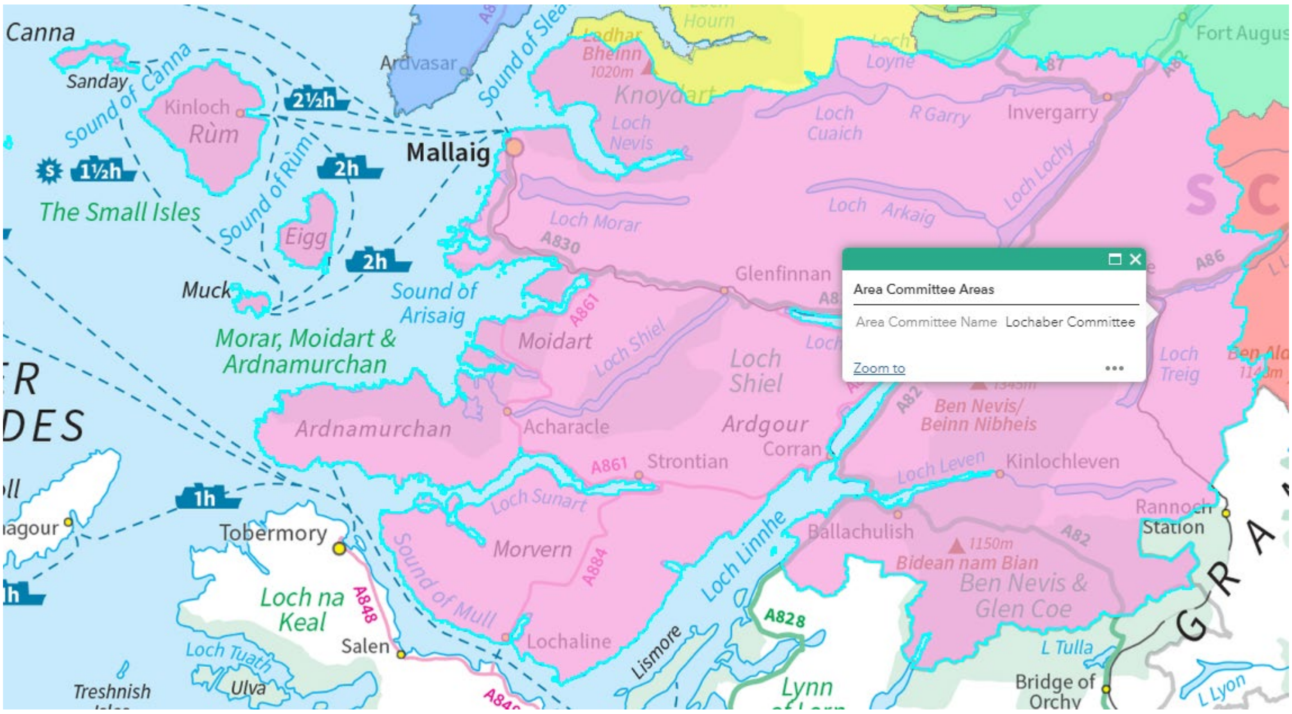

Sgeir nam
Faoileann
Ob nan
Ron
Slipway
Breun Phort
NTL
Quiraing Lodge
Cairnrobin
Carn
Ban
Cattle Grid
Weirs
36
choll/
nseall
27
Staffin/
Stafainn
Hall
27
Sheep
Dip
Chambered Cairn
Cadha
Riach
Garafad/
An Garadh Fada
Tel Ex
Sch
Meml
32
37
Cattle Grid
Cemy
76
48
85
Stepping
Stones
Clachan/
An Clachan
Sheepfold

Uig


Idrigill
North
Cuil
PO
NTL
King Edward
Pier
FERRIES
SHIP
Lochmaddy
Tarbert
Rubha
Dubh
MLWS
Uig
Tower
Peinsorai
Cuil
Sch
Uig Bay

Lochaber Area Profile

1 Lochaber Area Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements are (Main settlements defined in the West Highland & Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan) by order within the hierarchy) Fort William; Glencoe; Kinlochleven; Mallaig; North Ballachulish, Glenachulish and South Ballachulish; Spean Bridge and Roy Bridge; and Strontian. Fort William functions as a sub-regional centre.

Lochaber is extensive, covering 4,656km^2 and covers the most southerly portion of the Highland Local Development Plan area. Its climate is milder but wetter than most other parts of Highland. Only 7% of its land area is free from physical and heritage constraints and even this land may not be serviceable or free of crofting restrictions. It is very diverse in settlement terms varying from a dense "urban" pattern at Fort William, Caol and Kinlochleven designed to serve previous industrial employment to dispersed crofting township development in the remoter coastal and island communities. It has shorter connections to the central belt than other parts of Highland but those transport journeys are not necessarily quicker, safer or more reliable.

Key factual information is set out in Section 4 below.

3 How well does the Area function?

Lochaber has some of Highland's best natural and cultural heritage. However, as stated above this is both an advantage and a disadvantage. That heritage is important in species, habitats, visual and tourism economy terms but also restricts future development potential. Similarly, the vast majority of Lochaber is too steep, too high in altitude or too far from infrastructure connections to support settlement. Accordingly, development pressure is directed to the 7% of developable land which can undermine the aim of preserving inbye croft land and preventing sporadic housing development in the open countryside. Many of the heritage resources overlap the coast and constrain aquaculture and harbour related development and the employment they can provide. A tension remains about whether the Area should aim to resurrect its industrial development sites or concentrate on public sector and tourism-based employment.

An important current and future debate is whether the remoter rural parts of Lochaber should be repopulated. Population levels in the crofting areas were far higher in the early 1800s, current national planning policy promotes resettlement, but circumstances have changed and many depopulated parts of Highland are not overly suitable in terms of available employment, community facilities and infrastructure capacity.

4 "Infrastructure First" Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within Lochaber there are 12,956 premises 2,024 (16%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 7,284 (56%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 3,648 (28%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities** - there are no current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints for the mainstream schools within Lochaber – full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024.
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** – all main settlements have spare water and waste water treatment works capacity apart from Kinlochleven and Strontian which have very limited water treatment works capacity – all main settlements have network capacity issues for both water and sewerage.
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments** – many journeys within Lochaber are of limited mode choice, lengthy, expensive and unreliable – Fort William suffers from significant congestion for most of the year along and connecting to the A830 and A82 trunk roads - programmed investment in enhanced berthing and marshalling areas at the Corran Narrows will assist in better connectivity to Ardgour and beyond - otherwise, general concerns about road surface, bridge and winter condition of local road network - many roads are lifeline connections to remote rural communities with no practicable alternative route and many of the A roads still have single track sections.
- **Health Facility Capacity** – during 2022/23 the Belford Hospital in Fort William Broadford Hospital had an 88.9% bed occupancy and a 95.3% record of seeing A&E patients within 4 hours – 8 GP practices cover the Area based at Fort William, Kinlochleven, Eigg, Mallaig, South Ballachulish and Acharacle – most practices (Tweedale, Kinlochleven, Eigg, Mallaig and Acharacle) have a patients per GP ratio below the Highland average of 770 – however Craig Nevis, Glen Mor and South Ballachulish exceed that average.

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 20,038 (8.5% of Highland population).
- **Population Change** - (Census 2011-2022) +0.5% population loss compared to Scotland and Highland growth (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%).
- **Age profile** (Census 2022) 0-16 (16.3%) 65+ (23.0%) (a similar proportion of young and old as Highland average but a more aged profile than the Scotland profile) – falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023.
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** (Council Tax Data 2023) 73.8%.
- **Households** – (Census 2022) 9,427 occupied households.
- **House Completions** - long term average of 83 per year which is 7.1% of the Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e.
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Lochaber has a similar (9.8%) proportion than Highland (10.1%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating but a higher (16.6%) proportion than Highland (13%) with the worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights pockets of high (relative to the Scottish average) deprivation within central Fort William, Caol and Kinlochleven – elsewhere the other main settlements lie above the Scottish average - full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/.
- **Visitors to Highland** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK – most (75%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – half stayed in serviced accommodation – hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities.
- **Earnings** – Lochaber is covered by the Fort William Travel to Work Area – 2023 data indicated gross average weekly full time pay of £765.50.
- **Working from Home & Commuting** – (Ward data from Census 2022) – within the Fort William & Ardnamurchan Ward 32.6% of the workforce work mainly from home (marginally higher than Highland and Scotland averages) and 31.5% commute more than 10km to work (lower than the Highland and Scotland averages) – within Caol and Mallaig Ward 31.1% of the workforce work mainly from home (similar to the Highland and Scotland averages) and 32.8% commute more than 10km to work (lower than the Highland and Scotland averages)
- **Unemployment** – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active.
- **Employment sectors** – (2020 HIE data for Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross area) the top 3 employment sectors are: human health and social work (12.5%), wholesale and retail (12.8%) and accommodation and food services (25.0%).
- **Environmental and other constraints** - 93% of the Area is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Local Place Plan details via
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
Ardgour Local Place Plan – details via
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2381/ardgour_local_place_plan
Duror and Kentallen Local Place Plan – details via
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2431/duror_and_kentallen_local_place_plan

In Preparation
Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Local Place Plan (overlaps part of Lochaber)
Kinlochleven Local Place Plan
"Live Life" Morvern Local Place Plan
Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Local Place Plan

Highland Council is currently finalising the collaborative preparation of an Area Place Plan (APP) which collates an overview of local priorities development, investment and service delivery across the area - identified through stakeholder and public engagement in addition to reviewing the content of existing plans and strategies across public and community partners. Working towards finalisation by end of 2024, the APP will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

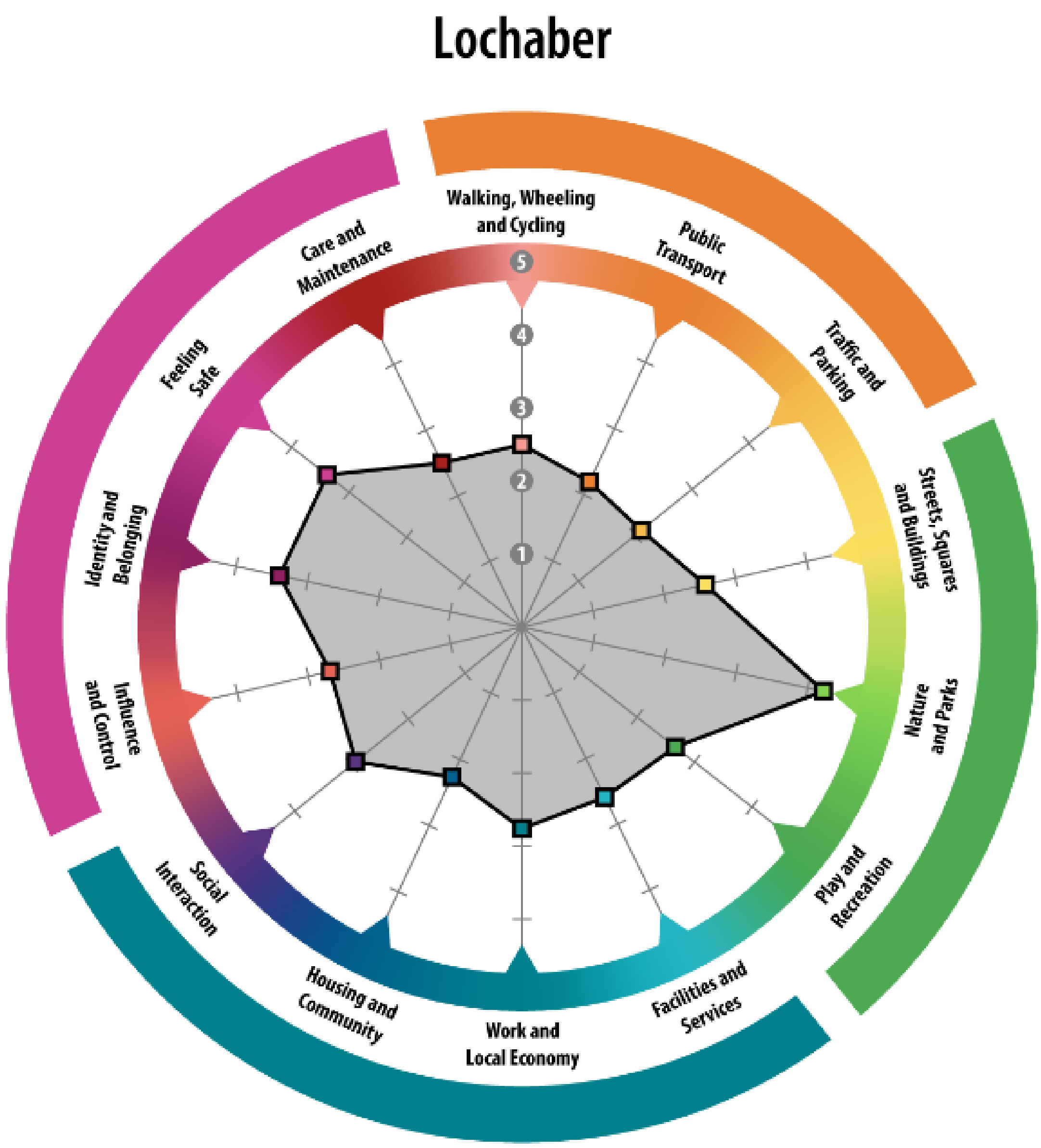
Community Partnership Plan
Lochaber Community Partnership has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive, the CP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area.

The Lochaber Community Partnership has established three Community Action Groups covering Caol, Fort William, and Kinlochleven, each of which will produce an Action Plan for their areas. The Fort William Action Plan is available via
https://highlandcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/FINAL-adopted-FWCAG-action-plan-Feb-2023.pdf

Lochaber Area Profile

6 Place Standard

Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).



Lochaber Area Average Score (2.8) is fourth lowest in Highland.

Response rate for the Place Standard Survey: 66 online responses, plus 109 young people engaged in HLH facilitated workshops.

Highest scores for area: *Nature & Parks* (4.2); *Feeling Safe* (3.5); *Identify & Belonging (pride in place)* (3.4)

Lowest scores for area: *Public Transport* (2.1); *Traffic & Parking* (2.2); *Housing & Community* (2.3); *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.5).

Lochaber Area Profile

Domains for which Lochaber compares well with rest of Highland:

- Across most domains, Lochaber scored around or below the Highland average score.
- *Influence & Sense of Control* (2.7) scored joint second Highest among sub-regional areas in Highland.

Domains for which Lochaber scores low compared with rest of Highland:

- *Social Interaction* (2.9) and *Facilities & Services* (2.6) both scored joint lowest among sub-regional areas in Highland
- *Play & Recreation* (2.7) scored joint second lowest in Highland.
- *Traffic & Parking* (2.2) scored joint third lowest in Highland.
- *Housing & Community* (2.3) scored fourth lowest in Highland.

Qualitative Feedback

- A high value is placed on access to nature and outdoor spaces, alongside concern over conservation and maintenance – with suggestions for more community involvement in nature restoration, as well as advocating for the role of ranger services in management of tourist behaviour.
- While paths in some settlements are generally well connected and well-lit, road and path maintenance are raised as a general concern, with potholes and uneven surfaces causing issues for wheelchair users in particular.
- Calls for wider, more connected cycle paths, increased cycle parking, traffic calming and pedestrian crossings, particularly near schools and on busy roads.
- While there is appreciation for ferry and bus services, particularly on school routes, timetables are regarded as poorly integrated and there are calls for more frequent and reliable services, especially during evenings and weekends.
- High levels of traffic congestion and unsafe driving during tourist season are a significant concern. Suggestions include increased parking enforcement, park and ride schemes and designated areas for campervans.
- Appreciation of public spaces, like Cameron Square in Fort William, alongside calls for improved maintenance of the high street to address disrepair and introduction of community artwork and greening to brighten the area.
- The Fort William bike track and sports facilities are well regarded (while there are calls for longer opening hours). However, parks and play equipment are regarded as poorly maintained and outdated. There are calls for increased community involvement in the upkeep of recreational spaces.
- Youth programmes and rural community centres are highlighted as integral to providing non-alcohol focused activities and preventing anti-social behaviour. However, concerns are raised about funding.
- While recent social housing developments are recognised, there are concerns over lack of affordable housing, particularly impacting ability of employers to hire and retain staff. Public transport is also raised as a limitation to accessing jobs in outlying areas.
- There are also calls for increased mid-market and accessible housing for the elderly and disabled. Some council housing is in need of better upkeep, with issues like damp.

- Desire for greater autonomy of local communities in decision making processes, particularly around maintenance, waste management and protection of the natural environment.
- Concerns around areas vulnerable to flooding and enhancing maintenance of drainage systems to cope with extreme weather events.

Youth concerns arising from HLH workshops:

- Designated youth spaces and teenager friendly spaces; skate parks; accessible and free to use outdoor spaces for sports (current spaces either have restricted access, prohibitively costly, or fully booked) and spaces for play and socialising which feature shelter from inclement weather. Playparks and outdoor spaces are often unappealing (overgrown, litter and glass), leading to young people facing public challenge when congregating in built up areas.
- Use of housing green space for resident growing and planting schemes.
- Consistent and meaningful inclusion of young people in decision making process; examples of recent good practice including preparation of Kinlochleven place plan and youth membership of community council.
- More art, music and colourful initiatives in communal public areas and transitional spaces such as walkways and paths and parks etc.
- Improved availability of shops where young people can buy clothing basics, without depending on online retail or long journeys to access.
- Access to services: e.g. links to Kinlochleven from outer villages and links to Fort William from South Lochaber.
- Improved public toilets in Strontian.
- Off-road walking routes in Acharacle.
- Fort William is regarded as well connected for walking, but could benefit from improved lighting on route to Caol for safety; better cycle paths and safer crossing area at the high school to get to the pump track and 'astro' pitch.
- Recent cuts to Fort William bus services during summer congestion have made young people dependent on lengthy car journeys to access social opportunities and employment.

7 Local Living Outcomes

In the area of the **Lochaber Committee Area** we surveyed 60604 Hex Cells

Of these 26316 - fall within SDAs or the area of Growing Settlements
2926 Cells contain the 7886Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells:

70.9% of residential properties are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (2698)** or **Highly Walkable (2898)**

Lochaber Area Profile

6.2% of residential properties (487) have **Few or No Walkable services**

The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in **Lochaber Area Committee Area** is 9.6 (out of a maximum possible of 16)

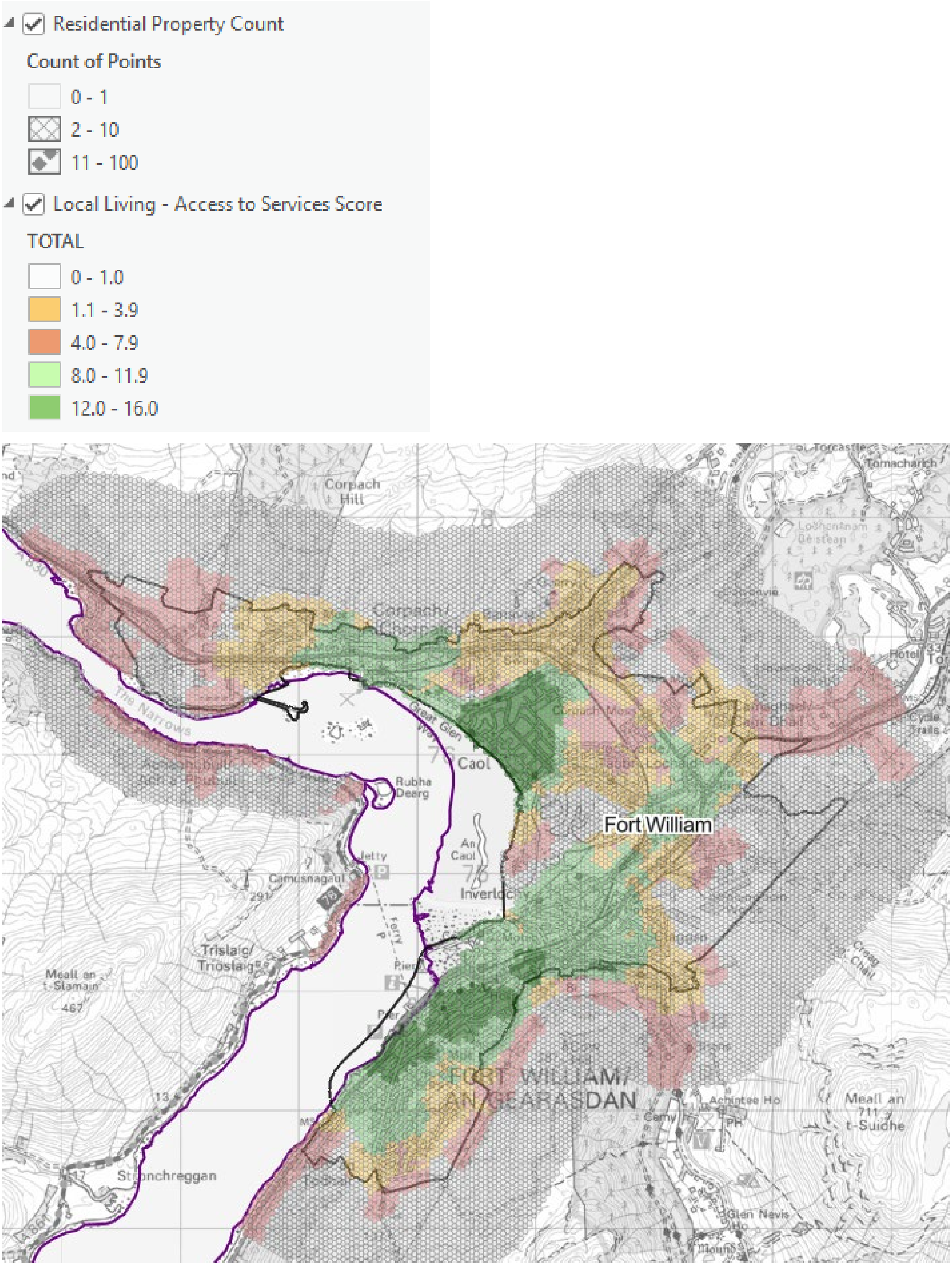
Kinlochleven SDA has the highest average residential score (at 13.0 per property)
Glenachulish Growing Settlement has the lowest average residential property score with an average of 3.6

		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties						Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Name	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Tota	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
GS	Ardgour and Clouvullin	4664	67	99	497.4	5.0	7	1.48	0	0	80	3	16	99	0.0%	0.0%	80.8%	3.0%	16.2%
GS	Acharacle	2989	85	112	748.6	6.7	11	1.32	0	17	74	11	10	112	0.0%	15.2%	66.1%	9.8%	8.9%
GS	Arisaig	1168	74	149	1497.2	10.0	11.8	2.01	0	138	7	4	0	149	0.0%	92.6%	4.7%	2.7%	0.0%
GS	Duror	3025	72	98	403.8	4.1	5.6	1.36	0	0	76	12	10	98	0.0%	0.0%	77.6%	12.2%	10.2%
SDA	Fort William	6517	1507	5066	48909	9.7	14	3.36	1713	2075	1149	109	20	5066	33.8%	41.0%	22.7%	2.2%	0.4%
SDA	Glenachulish	357	31	39	141.6	3.6	3.8	1.26	0	0	0	39	0	39	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
GS	Invergarry	1762	70	105	691.2	6.6	9	1.50	0	45	38	12	10	105	0.0%	42.9%	36.2%	11.4%	9.5%
GS	Kilchoan	464	20	30	246.6	8.2	9	1.50	0	29	1	0	0	30	0.0%	96.7%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Lochaline	747	53	109	1051.8	9.6	10.6	2.06	0	103	4	2	0	109	0.0%	94.5%	3.7%	1.8%	0.0%
SDA	Mallaig	587	158	391	3388	8.7	15.6	2.47	168	14	47	161	1	391	43.0%	3.6%	12.0%	41.2%	0.3%
GS	Morar	1507	58	84	412	4.9	6.8	1.45	0	0	58	23	3	84	0.0%	0.0%	69.0%	27.4%	3.6%
SDA	Roy Bridge	314	74	118	697	5.9	6.2	1.59	0	0	111	7	0	118	0.0%	0.0%	94.1%	5.9%	0.0%
SDA	South Ballachulish	387	129	316	3811.4	12.1	13	2.45	246	61	2	7	0	316	77.8%	19.3%	0.6%	2.2%	0.0%
SDA	Spean Bridge	408	139	278	3021.2	10.9	11.8	2.00	0	255	22	0	1	278	0.0%	91.7%	7.9%	0.0%	0.4%
SDA	Strontian	472	80	126	1355.8	10.8	13.2	1.58	89	9	15	13	0	126	70.6%	7.1%	11.9%	10.3%	0.0%
SDA	Kinlochleven	506	155	535	6976.8	13.0	13.6	3.45	482	36	17	0	0	535	90.1%	6.7%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	North Ballachulish	208	72	99	597.8	6.0	7.6	1.38	0	0	86	13	0	99	0.0%	0.0%	86.9%	13.1%	0.0%
SDA	Glencoe	234	82	132	1105	8.4	8.8	1.61	0	116	16	0	0	132	0.0%	87.9%	12.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	Grand Total	**26316**	**2926**	**7886**	**75552.2**	**9.6**	**15.6**	**2.70**	**2698**	**2898**	**1803**	**416**	**71**	**7886**	**34.2%**	**36.7%**	**22.9%**	**5.3%**	**0.9%**

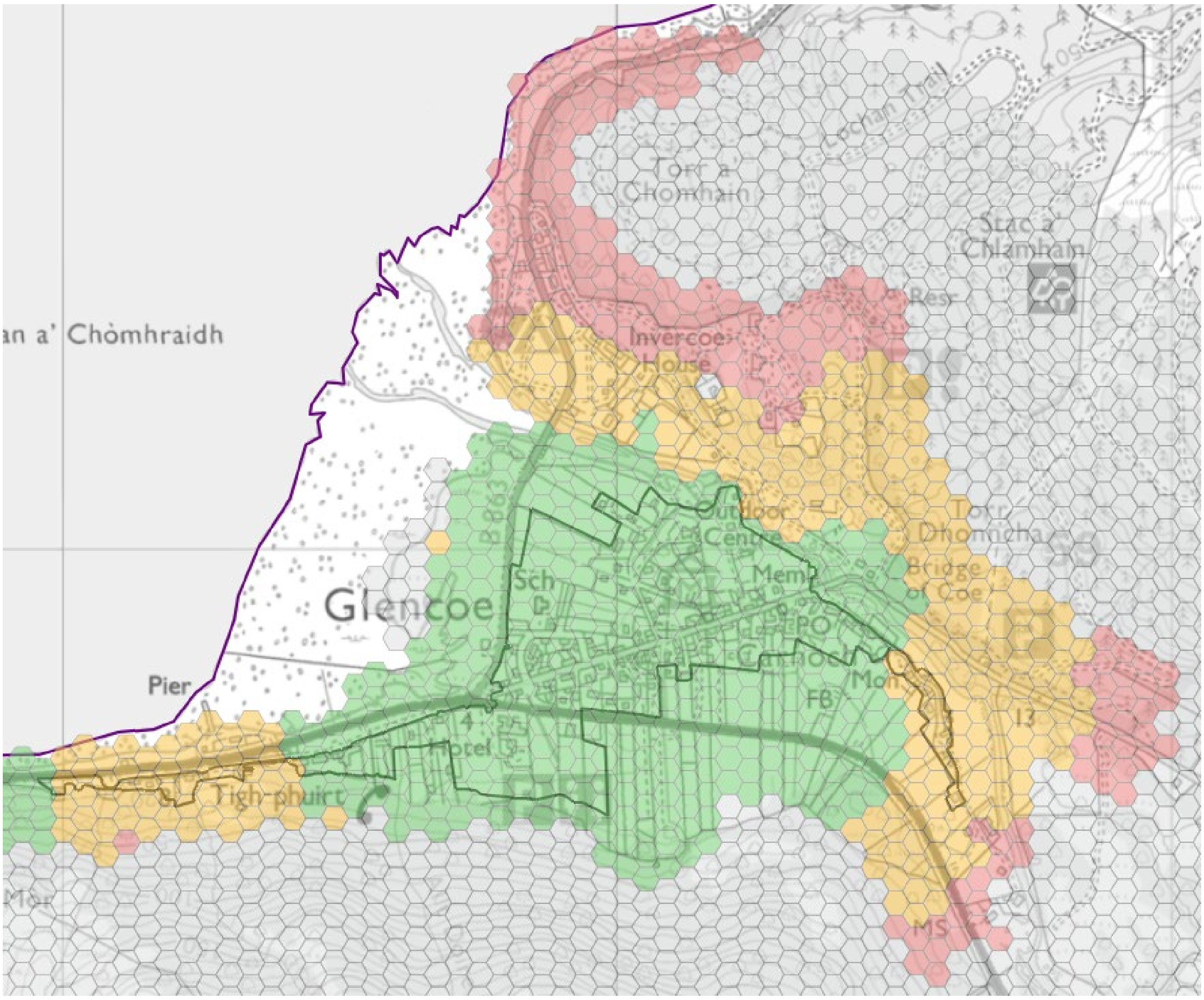
Full details via [Local Living Mapping (arcgis.com)]

Appendix – Local Living Outcomes Maps for Main Settlements

Fort William

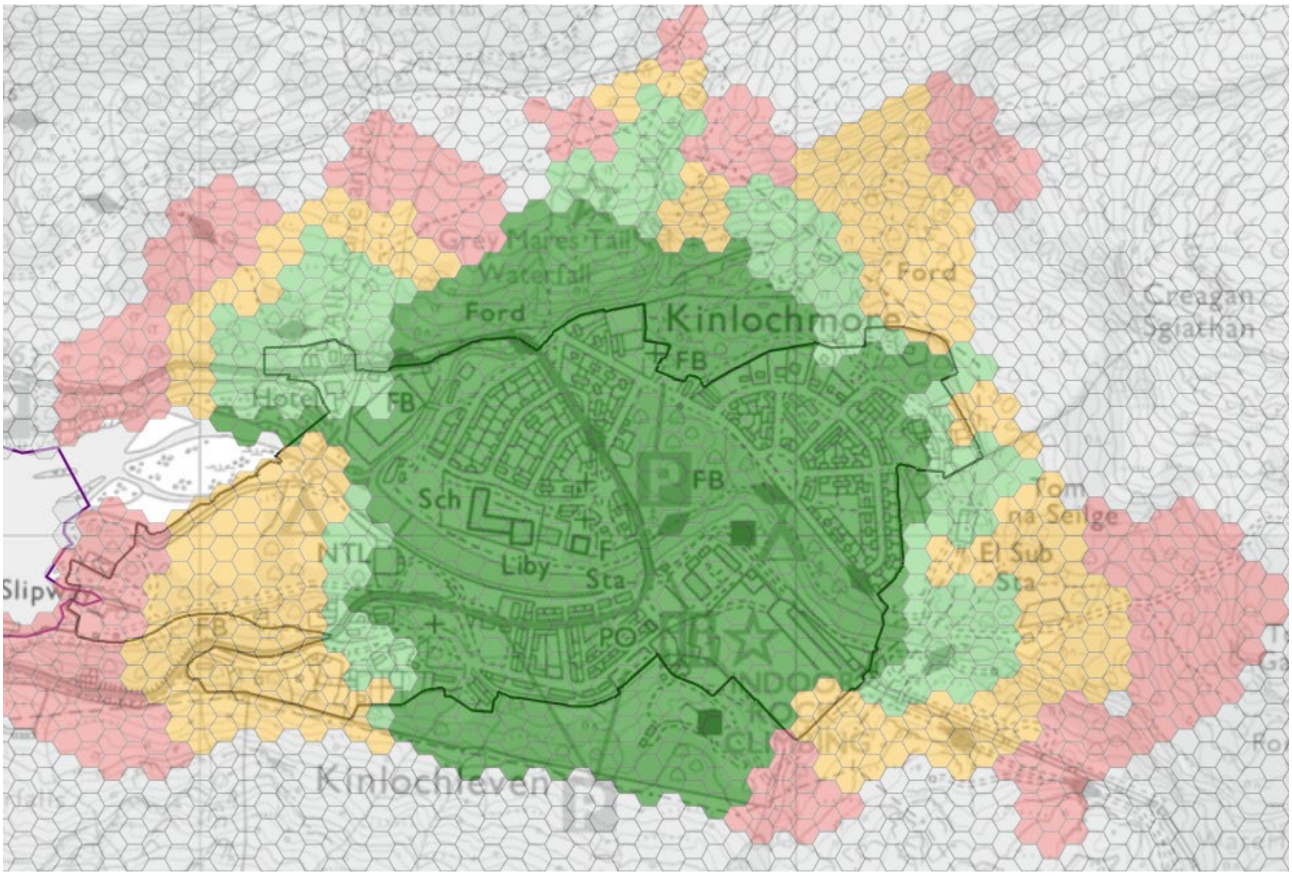


Glencoe

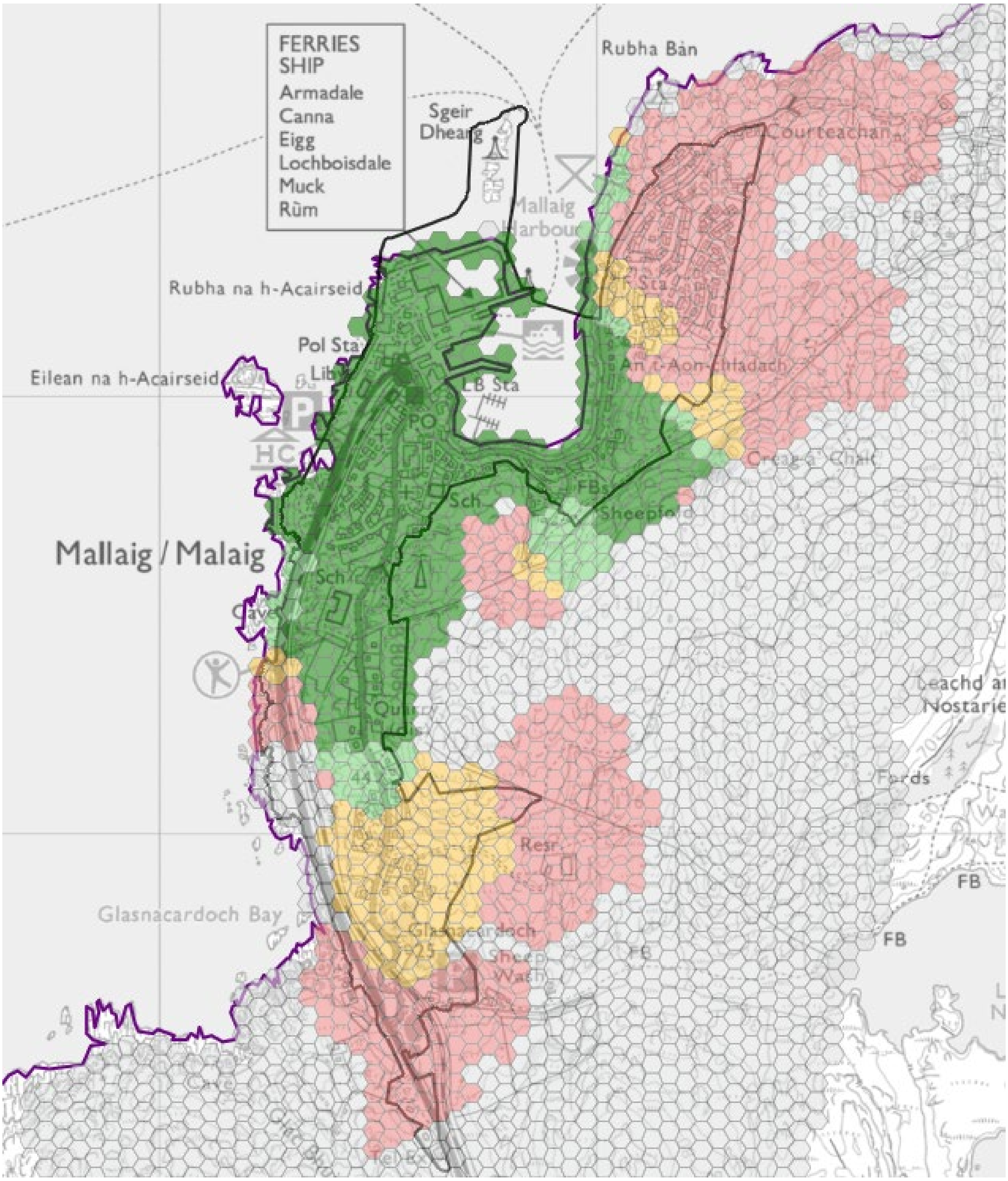

an a' Chòmhraidh
Torr a' Chomhain
Stac a' Chlamhain
Invercoe House
Rest
Outdoor Cent
Torr Dhonncha
Sch
Glencoe
Mem
PO
Bridge of Coe
Pier
FB
Hotel
Tigh-phuirt
MS
B 863
13

Lochaber Area Profile

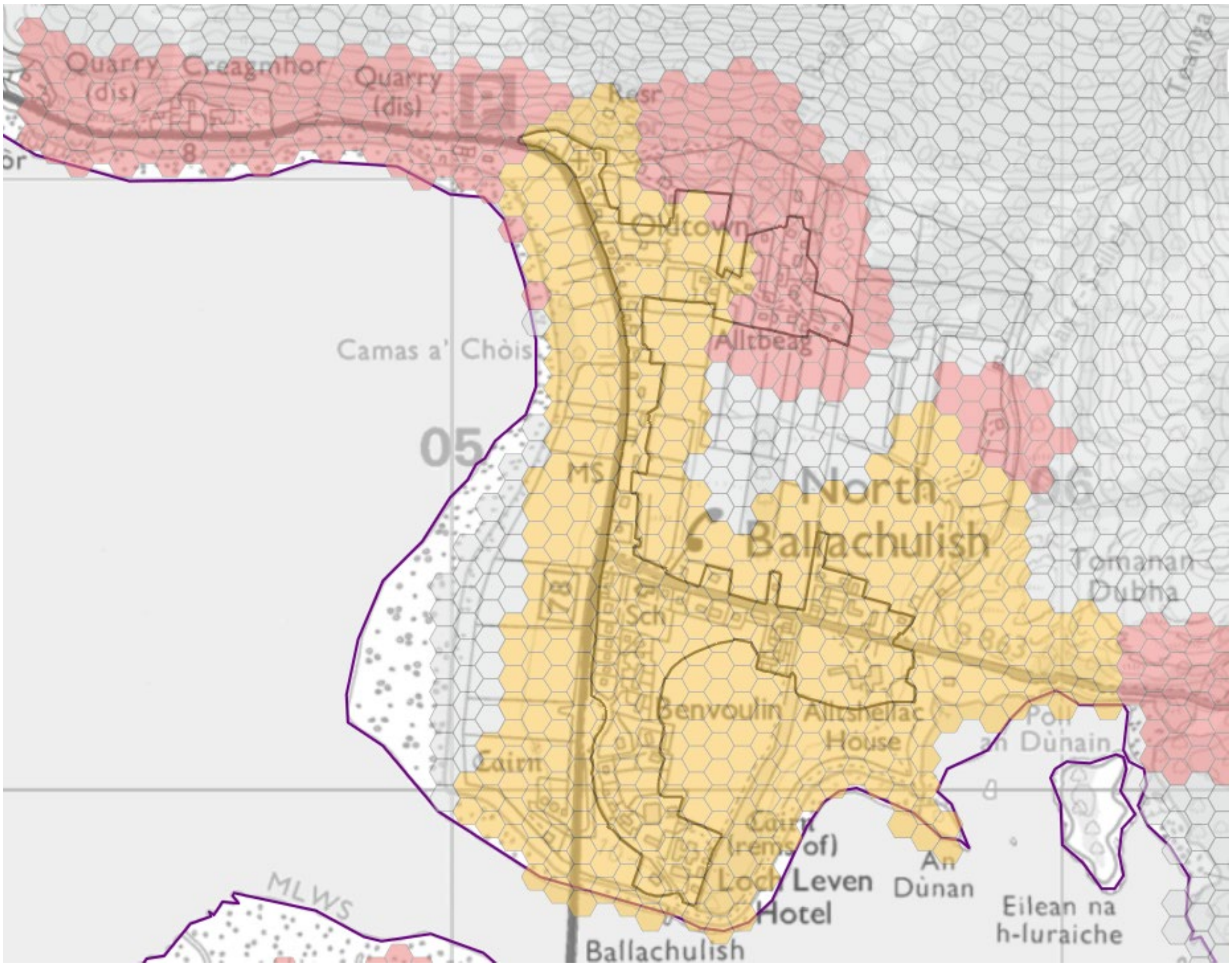
Kinlochleven



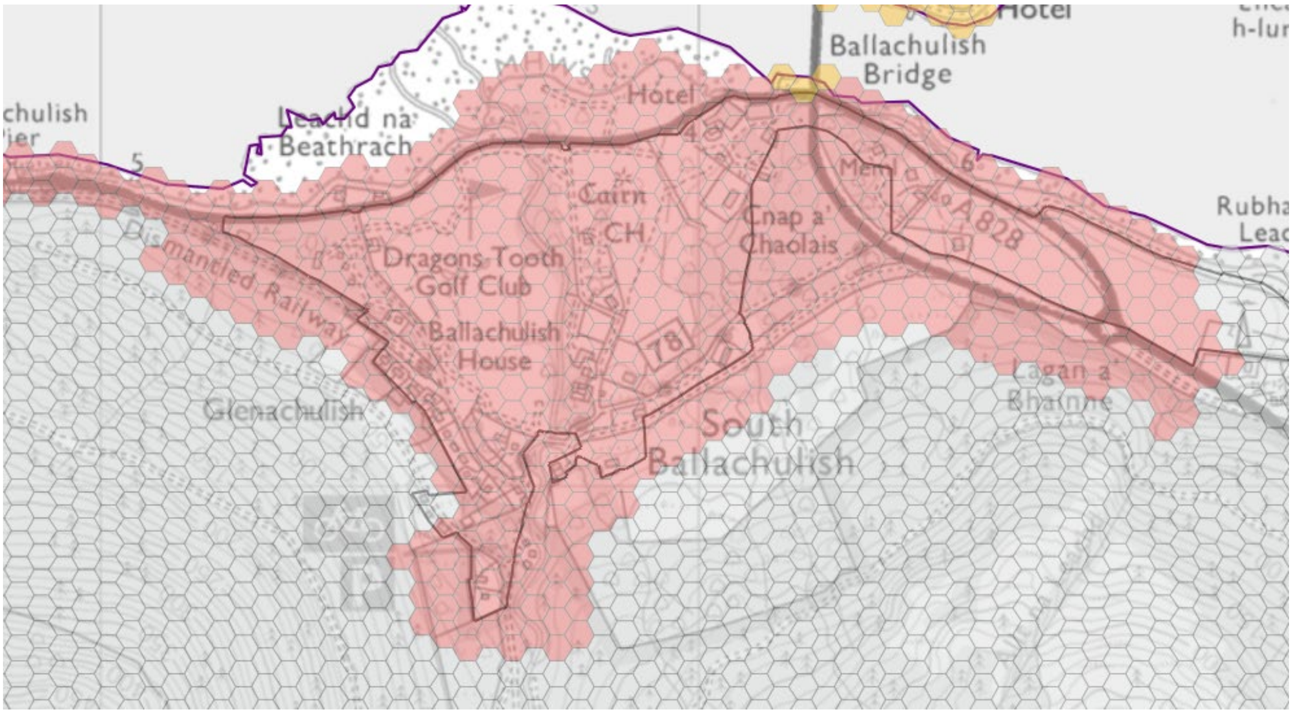
Mallaig


FERRIES
SHIP
Armadale
Canna
Eigg
Lochboisdale
Muck
Rùm
Rubha Bàn
Sgeir Dhearg
Mallaig Harbour
Rubha na h-Acairseid
Pol Sta
Eilean na h-Acairseid
Lib
LB Sta
PO
HC
Sch
FBs
Sheepfold
Mallaig / Malaig
Sch
Cave
Quarry
Resr
Glasnacardoch Bay
Glasnacardoch
Sheep Wash
FB
FB
FB
Fords
Nostarie

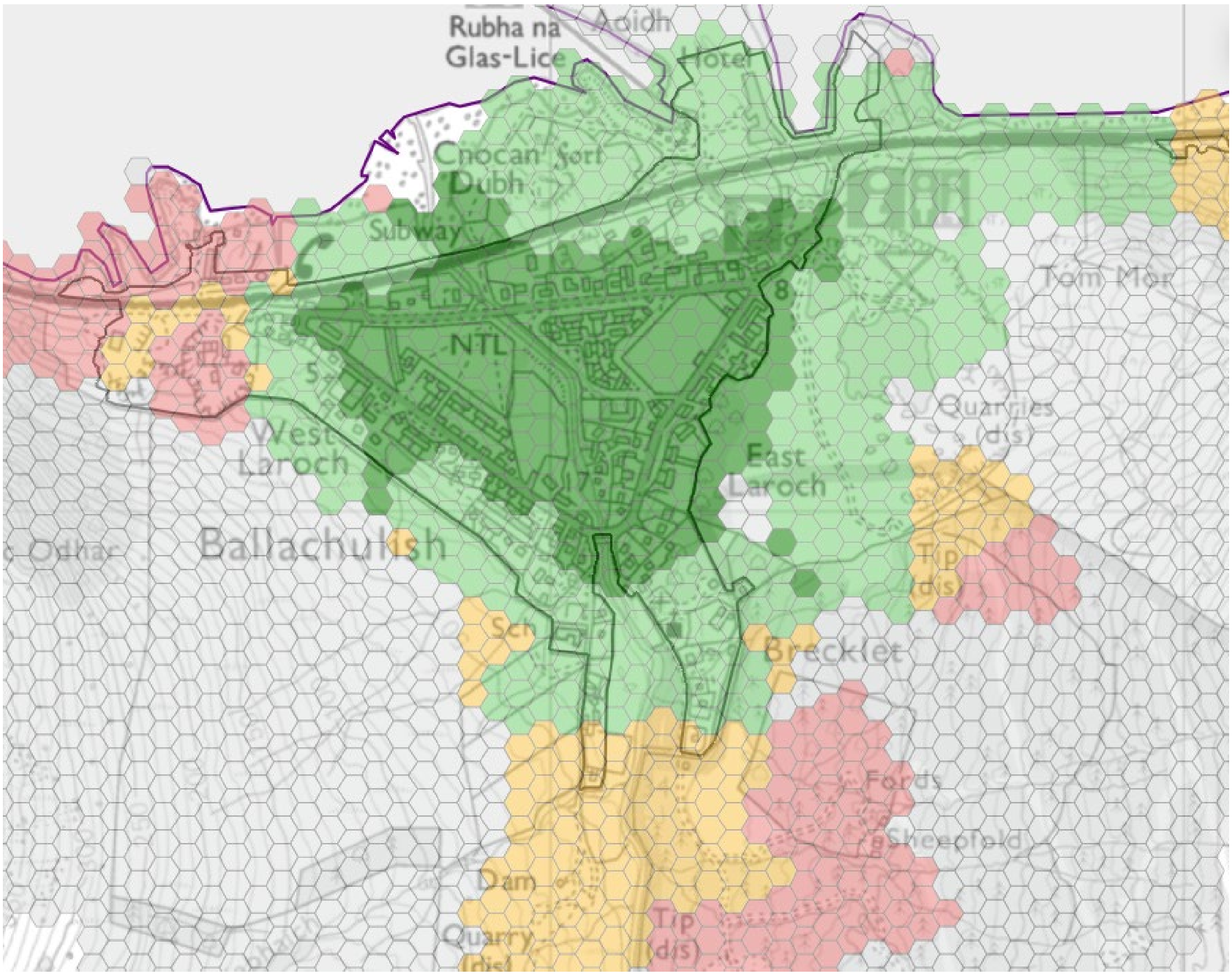
North Ballachulish



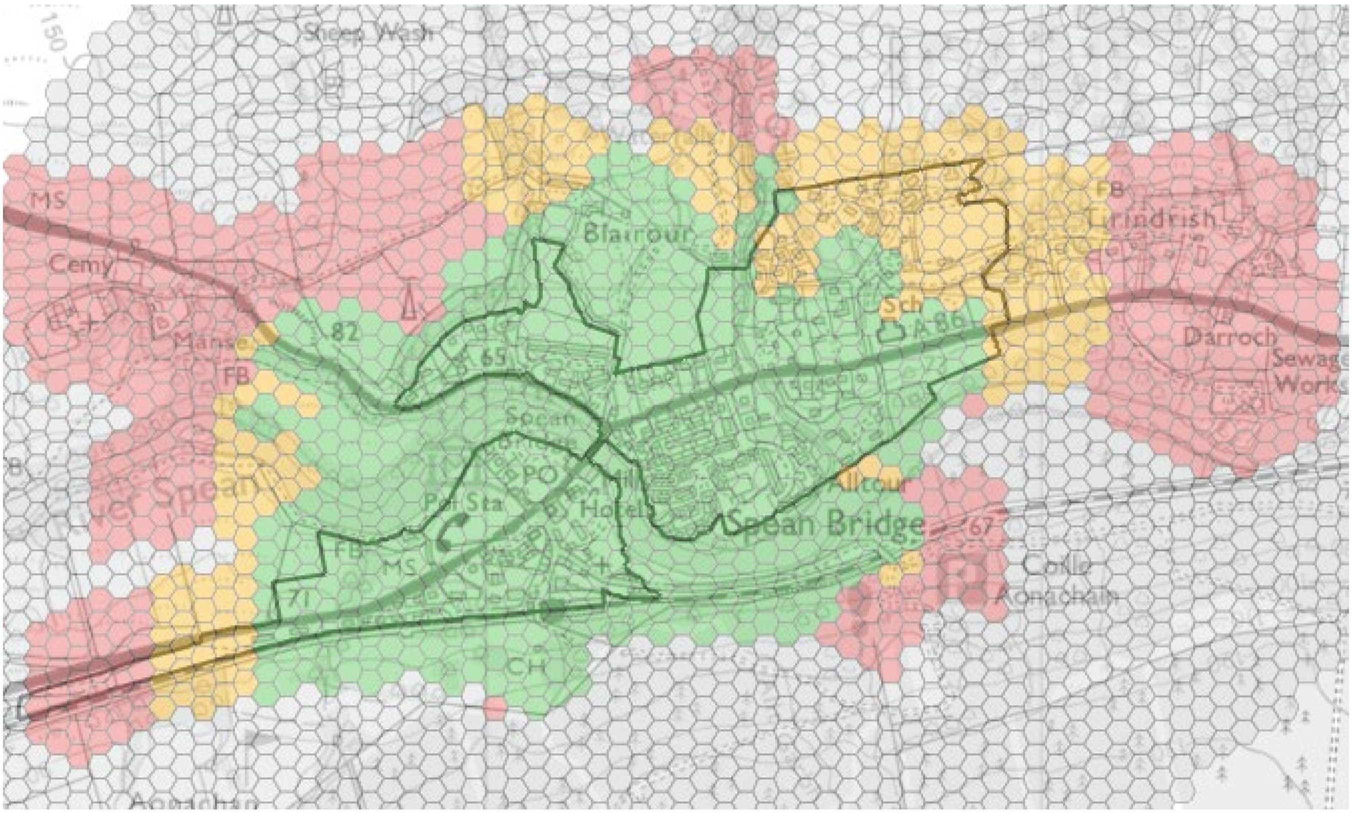
Glenachulish



South Ballachulish

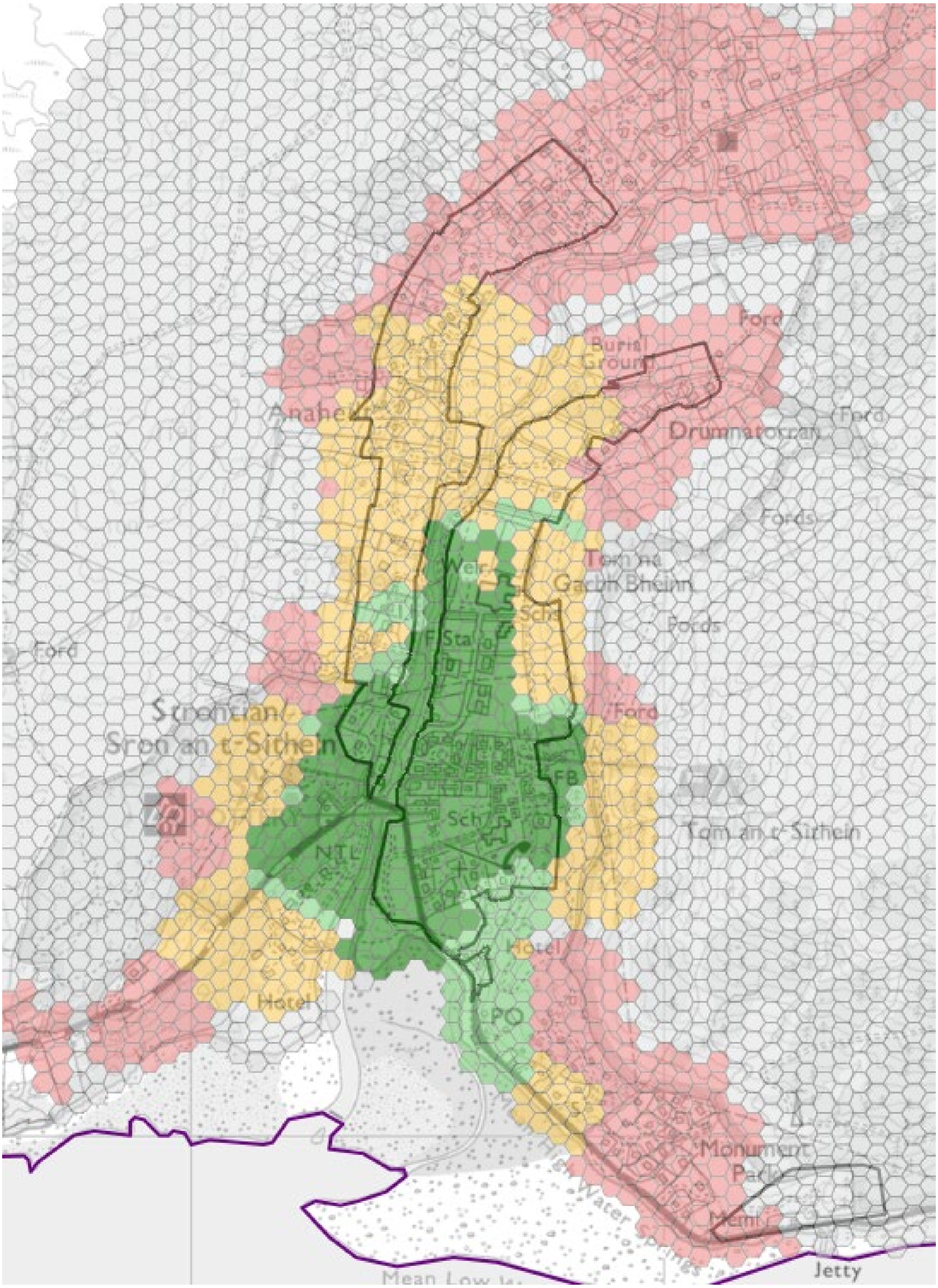


Spean Bridge



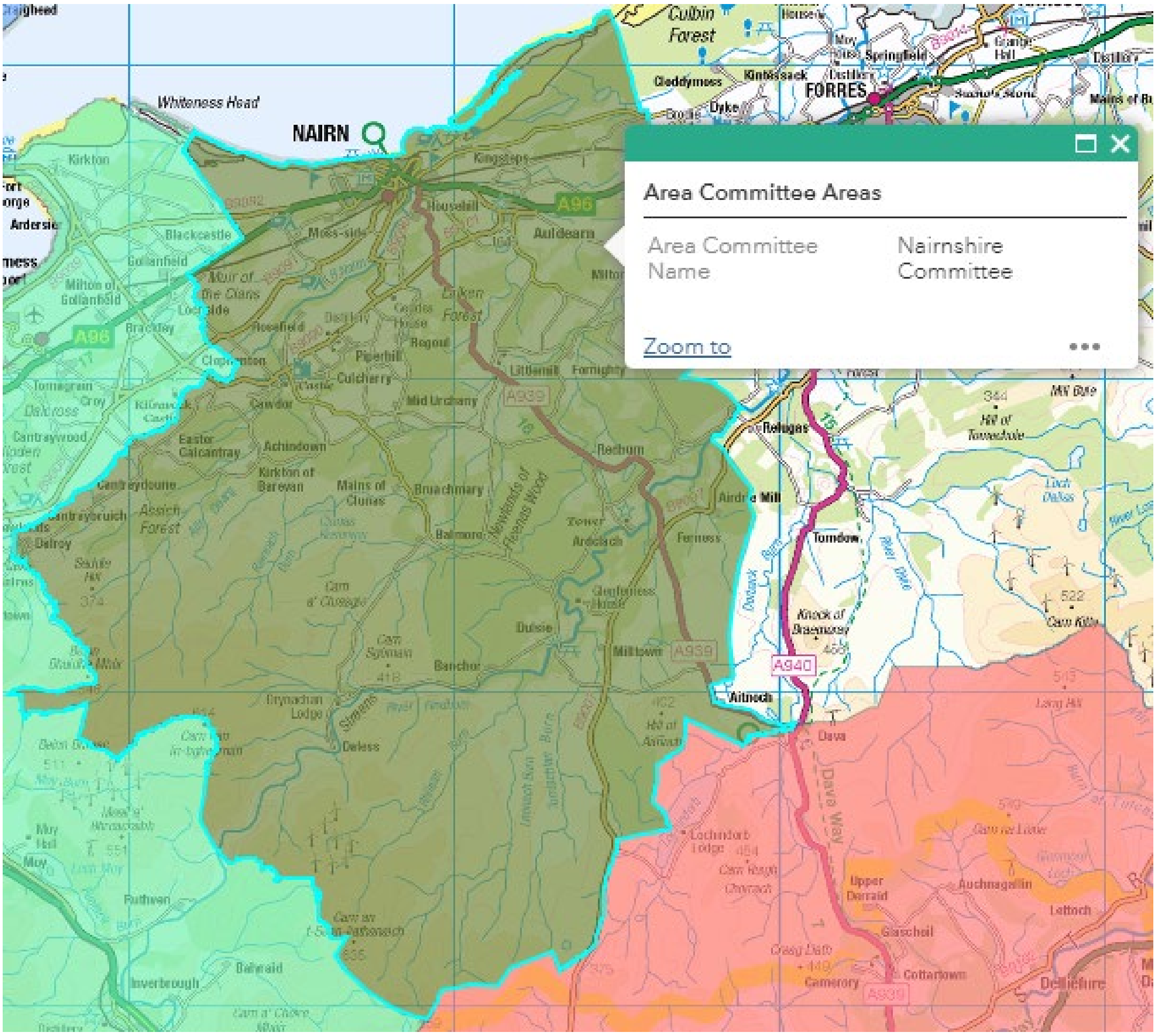
Roy Bridge

Strontian.


Burial Ground
Ford
Anaheilt
Drumnatorran
Fords
Tom na Garbh Bheinn
Sch
Sta
Fords
Ford
Strontian
Sron an t-Sithein
Ford
FB
Sch
NTL
Tom an t-Sithein
Hotel
Hotel
PO
Monument
Park
Jetty
Mean Low Water

Nairnshire Area Profile

1 Nairnshire Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements are (main settlements defined within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 in order of sustainability) Nairn and Auldearn

Nairn was an ancient fishing port and a later market town and lies about 17 miles east of Inverness. Like most coastal settlements its centre grew from the optimum fording point of the local river (the River Nairn, which bisects the present town). Today, the Royal Burgh has a mix of functions, still a market town with a good range of local facilities and services but now also a dormitory commuter and retirement settlement and a tourism magnet attracting visitors interested in beaches, golf, built and natural heritage all assisted by a local climate sunnier and drier than the rest of Highland.

Wider Nairnshire has similar attributes. Northern Nairnshire contains productive agricultural land and mineral reserves concentrated on the coastal plain. Land in southern Nairnshire is less productive, higher in altitude, less populous and more suited to less intensive land uses such as forestry and sporting estates. Cawdor and Auldearn are the other principal settlements both with strong historical heritage which attract visitors but limit the potential for expansion.

Key factual information is set out in Section 4 below.

3 How well does the Area function?

As stated above, Nairnshire has many attributes that attract people and investment. However, many of these assets also constrain further growth. For example, Nairn's high quality natural resources and built heritage and its compact market town form, limit where future growth could and should take place. Similarly, its infrastructure networks, which are concentrated along the coastal margins of the Area, restrict the potential for expansion. For example, the intertwining routes of the Inverness to Aberdeen rail line and trunk road create severance issues and create the need for more, expensive bridging solutions. These constraints are illustrated in the cost of progressing a trunk road bypass for Nairn and remedying Victorian combined sewer network capacity issues in central Nairn.

Diversifying the age profile and economy of Nairnshire would create a more balanced and resilient community. The tourism economy can be impacted by events such as the pandemic and exchange rates. The tourism sector also depends upon the availability of a younger workforce, which in turn needs suitable affordable accommodation albeit often on a seasonal basis. The Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport project particularly with the current expansion of job opportunities at Ardersier Port offers an opportunity to diversify into manufacturing and other business and industrial sectors. Nairn has a paucity of allocated and serviced business and industrial land and therefore a key future challenge will be to assess the need and optimum location for such development.

4 "Infrastructure First" Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within Nairnshire there are 7,076 premises 1,737 (25%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 2,782 (27%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 3,401 (48%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities** – there are no current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints at any Nairnshire schools – full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024.
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** - there is spare water treatment works capacity across the main settlements but limited wastewater treatment works capacity. There are also water and sewerage network capacity issues across all main settlements.
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments** – the scheduled but legally uncommitted Scottish Government A96 dualling scheme including a Nairn bypass is crucial to relieving congestion and air pollution issues within Nairn and creating a safer trunk road junction at Auldearn – the 2023 A96 traffic counts indicate an annual average two way flow of 12,765 (9% HGVs) west of Nairn and 10,609 (6% HGVs).
- **Health Facility Capacity** – during 2022/23 the Nairn Town & County Hospital had a 99.9% record of seeing A&E patients within 4 hours - GP practice provision is concentrated at Nairn with the current (July 2024) patients per GP ratio below that of the Highland average of 770.

Nairnshire Area Profile

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 12,585 (5.3% of Highland population).
- **Population Change** - (Census 2011-2022) + 4.3% higher than Scotland and Highland growth (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%).
- **Age profile** (Census 2022) 0-16 (15%) 65+ (28%) (similar to Highland but older than Scotland profile) – however falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023.
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** (Council Tax Data 2023) 79.8%.
- **Households** – (Census 2022) 5,997 occupied households.
- **House Completions** - long term average 60 per year which is 6% of Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e.
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Area has the same (10.1%) proportion as Highland (10.1%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating and a lower (9%) proportion than Highland (13%) with the worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights lower than national average levels of deprivation across most of Nairnshire but the Millbank and Tradespark parts of Nairn have higher than national average levels - full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/.
- **Visitors to Highland** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK – most (75%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – half stayed in serviced accommodation – hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities.
- **Employment** – (Inverness Travel to Work Area 2023) – 35,000 full time employees (almost half of Highland jobs), gross average weekly pay £744.80 – productivity (GVA/filled job) £53,700 compared to UK average of £57,721.
- **Working from Home & Commuting** – (Ward data from Census 2022) – 29.5% of the workforce work mainly from home (slightly lower than Highland and Scotland averages) but 46.7% commute more than 10km to work (much higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- **Unemployment** – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active.
- **Employment sectors** – (2020 HIE data for Inner Moray Firth area) the top 3 employment sectors within the Inner Moray Firth area are: human health and social work (19.8%), wholesale and retail (14.8%) and accommodation and food services (11.1%).
- **Environmental and other constraints** - 60% of Nairnshire is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).
- **Advie & Environs** – a small, populated part of the Badenoch & Strathspey Ward near Advie lies outwith the Cairngorms National Park area – the relevant 2022 Census output area data revealed this area comprised 49 occupied households and 97

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Local Place Plan details via
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
None to date

In Preparation
Nairn & Nairnshire Local Place Plan – details via
https://ournairnshire.org/

The Vision Statement for the Nairn & Nairnshire Local Place Plan is as follows: "Our vision for Nairn is to create a vibrant, welcoming community that sustains and nurtures its residents, visitors, employers, and investors. We aim to provide a thriving environment where people can live happily, businesses can prosper, and the local economy flourishes."

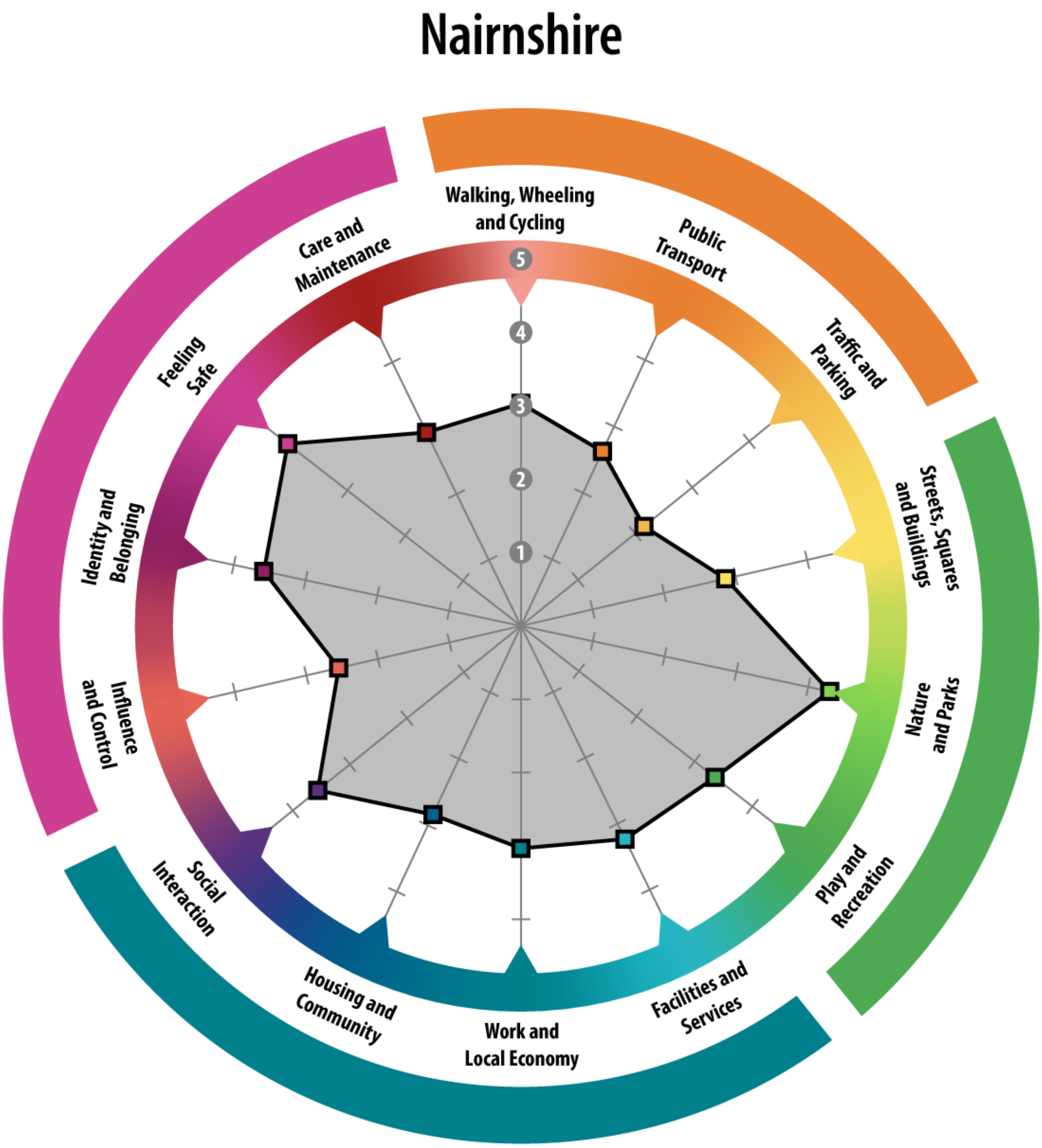
Whilst formally comprising an LPP, with its coverage of local priorities across the whole committee geography, the Nairnshire Local Place Plan will also be considered as part of Highland Council's programme of 'Area Place Plans'. The hybrid area/local plan collates an overview of local priorities for development, investment and service delivery across the area - identified through stakeholder and public engagement in addition to reviewing the content of existing plans and strategies across public and community partners. The APP/LPP hybrid will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

Community Partnership Plan
Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive, the CP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area.

The Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership (NNCP) has produced a Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership Plan 2021 - 2022 and is currently in the process of developing an action plan for the area, which will include regard for community feedback gathered during preparation of the hybrid area/local place plan.

6 Place Standard

Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).



Nairnshire Average Score (3.1) is the second highest among sub-regional areas in Highland.

However, **the area's survey response rate for the Place Standard Survey was notably low**: **34 responses, plus 11 young people involved in HLH facilitated sessions.** This may reflect consultation fatigue following extensive prior community engagement on related themes, as part preparations for the Area Local Place Plan.

Highest scores for area: *Nature & Parks* (4.3); *Feeling Safe* (4.0); *Social Interaction* (3.6); *Play & Recreation* (3.4)

Lowest scores for area: *Traffic & Parking* (2.1); *Public Transport* (2.6); *Influence & Control* (2.7); *Housing & Community* (2.8)

Domains for which Nairnshire compares well with rest of Highland:

Nairnshire scored highest, or among the highest across sub-regional areas for all domains, except for *Traffic & Parking* (2.1).

Domains for which Nairnshire scores low compared with rest of Highland:

- *Traffic & Parking* (2.1) was scored second lowest in Highland.

Qualitative Feedback

- Nairnshire was regarded as generally benefiting from accessible routes for the enjoyment of recreational walking and cycling. However, demand was expressed for dedicated cycle lanes, improved pathway maintenance, lowering of curbs, and a footbridge over the railway.
- Nairn is well served by transport links, notably rail, but there is demand for better integration of services, later services and more amenities, like seating and cycle storage at stations.
- Free parking was highlighted as highly beneficial to locals and visitors.
- Major concerns were raised about the A96 trunk road through Nairn as unfriendly to pedestrians – including congestion, issues with pedestrian crossings and speed enforcement.
- While the quality of green spaces was highlighted as a positive, maintenance of public spaces and vacant buildings were highlighted as concerns.
- Concerns were raised over sewerage management and water quality at the river Nairn and beaches, particularly after storms.
- Responses show appreciation for local healthcare, library, leisure facilities and parks, but highlight need for maintenance of existing equipment and more facilities targeted at teenagers (e.g. skate park).
- Need for increased affordable housing and improved maintenance of older buildings.
- Flood defences and coastal erosion were raised as environmental concerns, alongside interest in potential for local district heating systems and rewilding of some green spaces to enhance biodiversity.

Youth concerns arising from HLH workshops:

- Need for safer cycle routes around the town centre, particularly along the A96.
- Desire for increased informal after school youth activities (seeking funding to make use of community centre).

- Access to basketball / netball court outside school hours (potential use of court at primary school)
- Feeling safe outdoors was raised as a concern for the Tradespark and Queenspark areas, due to drug and alcohol misuse.
- Anticipated new school facilities are a high priority.

7 Local Living Outcomes

In the area of the **Nairnshire Committee Area** we surveyed **13187** Hex Cells

Of these **5176** - fall within SDAs or the area of Growing Settlements

1809 Cells contain the 5130 Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells:

65.5% of residential properties are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (1825)** or **Highly Walkable (1523)**; **3.4% of residential properties (381)** have **Few Walkable services**

The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in **the Nairnshire Committee Area** Is **9.5** (out of a maximum possible of 16)

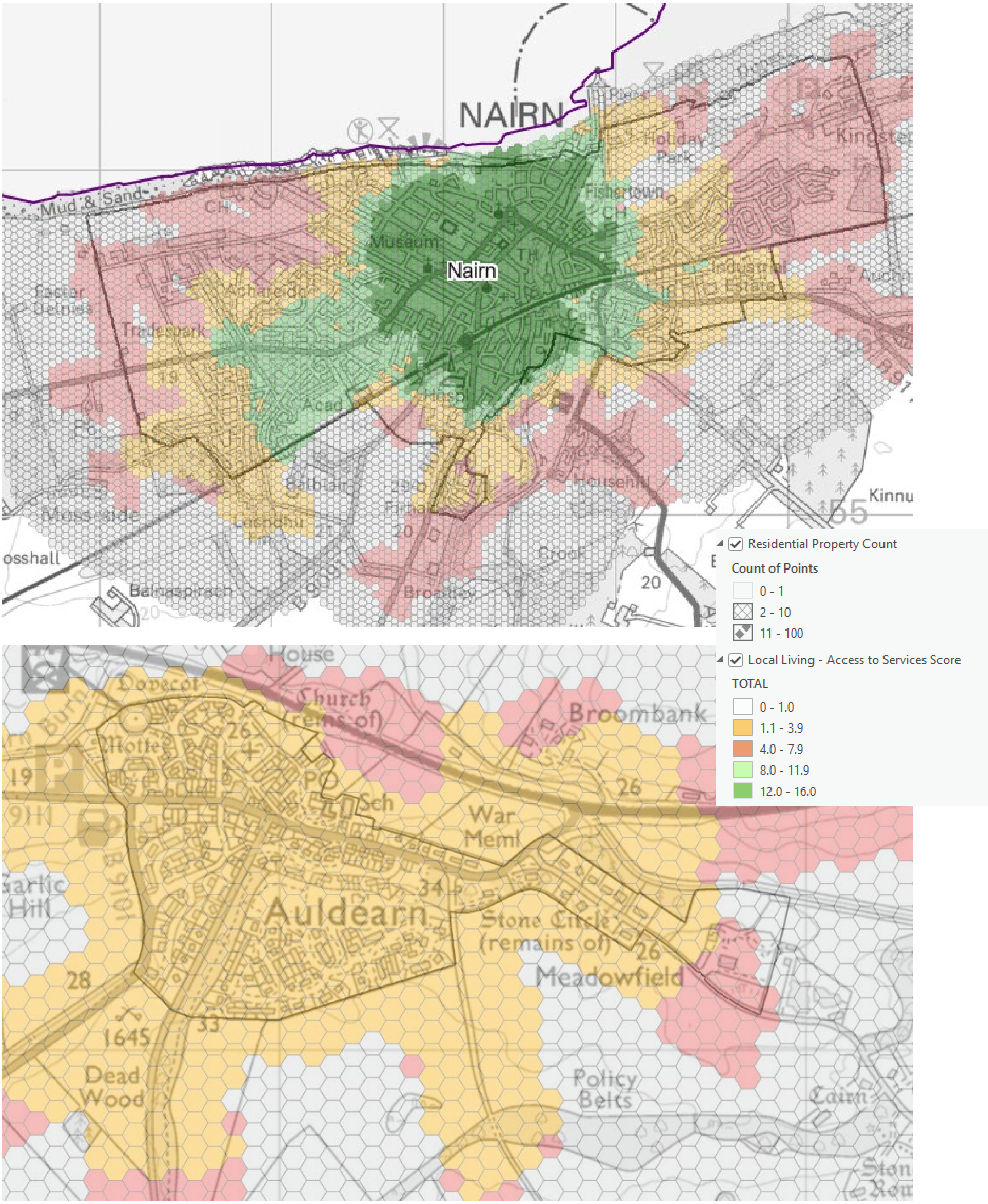
Nairn SDA has the highest average residential score (at **9.6** per property)

Auldearn SDA has the lowest average residential property score with an average of **7.7**

		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties						Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Name	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Tota	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
SDA	Auldearn	285	146	347	2689.2	7.7	7.8	2.38	0	0	346	0	1	347	0.0%	0.0%	99.7%	0.0%	0.3%
GS	Cawdor	941	46	63	538.6	8.5	9.8	1.37	0	48	11	4	0	63	0.0%	76.2%	17.5%	6.3%	0.0%
SDA	Nairn	3950	1617	4720	45466.6	9.6	15.2	2.92	1825	1484	1238	172	1	4720	38.7%	31.4%	26.2%	3.6%	0.0%
		5176	**1809**	**5130**	**48694.4**	**9.5**	**15.2**	**2.84**	**1825**	**1532**	**1595**	**176**	**2**	**5130**	**35.6%**	**29.9%**	**31.1%**	**3.4%**	**0.0%**

Nairnshire Area Profile

Appendix – Local Living Outcomes Maps for Main Settlements



10 Sutherland

Sutherland Area Profile

1 Sutherland Boundary Map

2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements are (main settlements defined within the Caithness & Sutherland Local Development Plan) Ardgay, Bonar Bridge, Brora, Dornoch, Edderton, Golspie, Helmsdale, Lairg, Lochinver and Tongue.

Sutherland covers a large part of north Highland and is distinctly a county of two halves. Most settlement is concentrated within mid and east Sutherland closer to the more productive agricultural land, with a drier climate and more sheltered coastal ports. This east coast also has better transport connections along the A9 and Far North (rail)Line. North and west Sutherland is more remote, less settled, less connected and contains land less capable of productive cultivation. However, it does contain exceptional natural and cultural heritage and therefore can sustain significant tourism-based employment. Aquaculture, crofting and deeper sea fishing from the ports at Lochinver and Kinlochbervie provide some economic diversification. The lack of a critical mass local population means that higher order facilities and services require a long and often unreliable journey particularly if made by public transport.

More positively, this fragility promotes better community and individual self-reliance and resilience.

3 How well does the Area function?

As stated above, north, west and parts of mid Sutherland have socio-economic fragility issues. There is no practicable solution to geographic realities such as physical constraints and remoteness and therefore bolstering the principal settlements within the area and their digital and transport connectivity to other larger centres appears the best way forward. Innovative public transport solutions have been trialled already. Resettlement of previously cleared glens has been suggested but will require a high level of public subsidy to make these areas suitable in employment and public service provision terms.

South and east Sutherland functions better because of its more benign and productive natural resources and better connectivity. However, challenges still remain whether that's revitalising the town centres of Brora, Dornoch and Golspie, addressing the coastal and fluvial flood risk that affects all three settlements or tackling water and sewerage capacity issues.

4 "Infrastructure First" Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within Sutherland there are 9,775 premises 4,251 (44%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 4,625 (47%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 899 (9%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities** – there are no current and/or forecast physical capacity constraints at any school within Sutherland – full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024.
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** – there is spare water treatment works capacity at all main settlements apart from Lochinver but water and sewerage network capacity issues affect all main settlements – in terms of sewage works capacity then Dornoch, Brora, Golspie, Lairg and Tongue can accommodate further growth but Ardgay, Bonar Bridge, Edderton, Helmsdale and Lochinver have major constraints
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments** – vehicle numbers and congestion aren't a year-round capacity issue. However, road safety and maintenance issues predominate with limited investment targeted to address these matters.
- **Health Facility Capacity** – during 2022/23 the Lawson Memorial Hospital in Golspie Dingwall had a 99.8% record of seeing A&E patients within 4 hours – other community healthcare provision is available via the Migdale Hospital at Bonar Bridge and will be via the new Tongue Health & Social Care Hub - GP practice provision is spread across 8 practices with all but the Golspie Medical Practice having a patients per GP ratio of below the Highland average of 770.

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 13,487 (5.7% of Highland population).
- **Population Change** - (Census 2011-2022) -2.0% drop compared to Scotland and Highland growth (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%) – the North, West & Central Sutherland showed a -6% drop.
- **Age profile** (Census 2022) 0-16 (12.5%) 65+ (28%) (a far older profile than that for Highland and Scotland) – falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend across Highland with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023.
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** (Council Tax Data 2023) 54.4%.
- **Households** – (Census 2022) 6,074 occupied households.
- **House Completions** - long term average 51 per year which is 6% of Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e.
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Area has a lower (6%) proportion than Highland (10%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating and a far higher (28%) proportion than Highland (13%) with worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights that most settlements have average deprivation scores close to the Scotland average – only Helmsdale and Lochinver are worse than that average across the whole settlement but not to a significant degree - full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/.
- **Visitors to Highland** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK – most (75%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – half stayed in serviced accommodation – hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities. The Caithness & Sutherland Tourism Destination Recovery Strategy 2021-2024 reported that a significant portion) but 48.5% commute more than 10km to work (much higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- **Earnings** – (Golspie & Lairg Travel to Work Area 2023) – gross average full time weekly pay

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

North West 2045 – is a Place Plan that represents the North West Sutherland area and has been prepared across a number of community groups. It focuses on 3 visionary aims:

- to make the North West Highlands an attractive place to live and work;
- to build towards a diverse and sustainable local economy; and
- to empower communities to shape their own future.

Practically this equates to 6 shared goals:

- Affordable housing for young people and families;
- High speed broadband access for all
- Rural hubs to support businesses, homeworking and delivery of services
- A healthy food scheme based on local produce
- A new Regional Land Use Partnership to support green economic recovery
- New forms of local democracy to give communities a greater role in decision-making.

A Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) Pilot project is also being pursued in North West Sutherland. This project will enable natural capital-led consideration of how to maximise the contribution that our land can make to addressing the twin climate and biodiversity crises. It will also help to optimise land use in a fair and inclusive way – meeting local and national objectives and supporting Scotland's just transition to net-zero.

Local Place Plan details via
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
None to date

In Preparation
Kinochbervie Local Place Plan
Tongue, Melness & Skerray Local Place Plan
Helmsdale & District Local Place Plan
Bettyhill, Altnaharra & Strathnaver Local Place Plan
Rogart Local Place Plan
Golspie Village Plan
"Edderton Going Forward" Plan
Kyle of Sutherland Place Plan

In collaboration with Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust and Sutherland Community Partnership, Highland Council is also currently preparing an Area Place Plan (APP) which collates an overview of local priorities development, investment and service delivery across the area. Anticipated to be in draft form by end of 2024, priorities will be identified through stakeholder and public engagement in addition to reviewing the content of existing plans and strategies across public and community partners. The APP will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

Community Partnership Plan

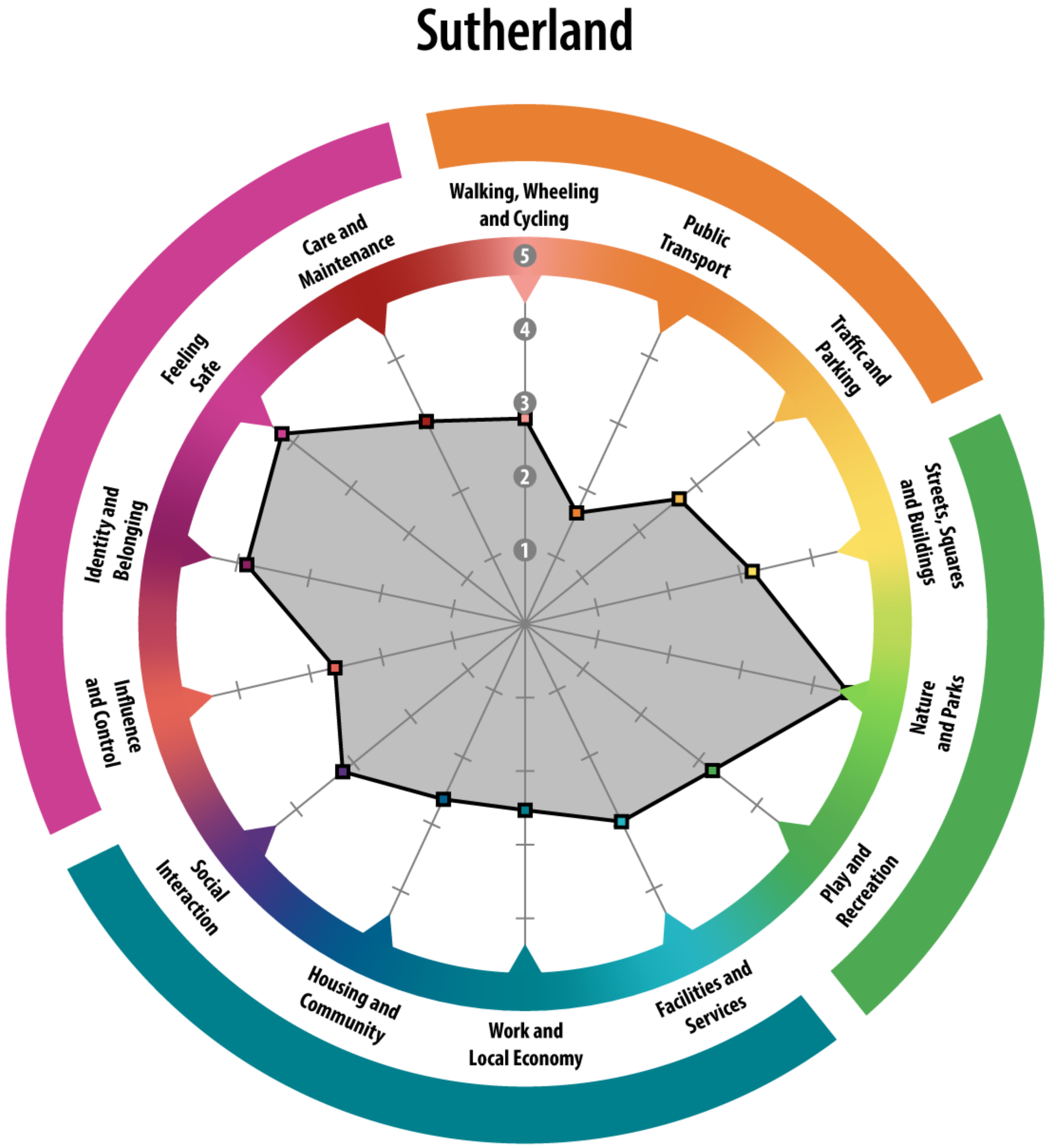
Sutherland Community Partnership (SCP) has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the SCP area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive. SCP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area.

The key themes and priorities that Sutherland Community Partnership are working towards are: Transport; Employability; Poverty; Sutherland Cares Sutherland Pathfinder Reports; and, Homes for People and Infrastructure. Several community plans have also been developed (details via the weblink above).

Sutherland Area Profile

6 Place Standard

Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).



Sutherland Average Score (3.0) is joint second highest among sub-regional areas in Highland.

Response rate for the Place Standard Survey: **113** online responses, plus four HLH facilitated workshops with local young people.

Sutherland Area Profile

Highest scores for area: *Nature & Parks* (4.5); *Feeling Safe* (4.2); *Pride in Place* (3.9); *Streets, Squares & Buildings* (3.3); *Play & Recreation* (3.2).

Lowest scores for area: *Public Transport* (1.7); *Work & Local Economy* (2.5); *Housing & Community* (2.6)

Domains for which Sutherland scores low compared with rest of Highland:

- *Work & Local Economy* (2.5) scored joint lowest in Highland.
- *Public Transport* (1.7) scored joint third lowest in Highland.

Domains for which Sutherland compares well with rest of Highland:

- **Spaces** grouping (3.6) scored highest in Highland; within which:
    - *Streets, Squares & Buildings* (3.2) and *Nature & Parks (*4.5) both scored highest in Highland.
    - *Play & Recreation* (3.2) scored second hightest in Highland.
- **Civic & Stewardship** grouping (3.4) scored highest in Highland; within which, *Influence & Control* (2.7), *Identify & Belonging* (3.9), *Feeling Safe* (4.2), *Care & Maintenance* (3.0) all scored highest in Highland.

<u>Themes arising from public feedback</u>

- Appreciation for local community facilities, village halls and outdoor spaces, such as playgrounds – particularly local post offices and medical services. While community efforts to maintain public spaces are appreciated, concerns raised over general maintenance; including, roads, streets, buildings, green spaces,
- Access to a wider range of services and facilities is a significant concern, particularly in more remote areas – including greengrocers, bakeries, limited opening hours of libraries and lack of dining options in some settlements as a difficulty for both residents and visitors. This difficulty is compounded by lack of public transport options to access services at a distance.
- Narrow footpaths and lack of dedicated cycle paths, particularly along the A9 make cycling dangerous.
- Demand for more connected and safer routes for walking, especially to schools and shops. Poor road conditions (potholes, uneven surfaces) pose safety risks for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Calls for more frequent, reliable and affordable public transport, with improved links to shopping areas, medical facilities, schools and integration with rail services.
- Concerns over the seasonal pressures arising from NC500 tourism: demand for increased motorhome parking, parking enforcement, traffic management,
- Concerns about the poor condition of some existing housing stock, as well as demand for investment in a variety of housing types; including new, energy efficient and affordable housing for social rent, long-term mid-market rental and purchase, particularly for first time buyers.

Concerns arising for Children & Young People:

- Difficulty getting to schools, shops and facilities by walking or cycling. Concerns about safe routes to school due to high-speed traffic, lack / poor condition of pavements and lack of street lighting in some areas.
- Desire for improved morning bus services for young people accessing further education and employment, including links to Inverness.
- Concern that valued outdoor spaces often depend upon maintenance by elderly volunteers.

7 Local Living Outcomes

In the area of the **Sutherland Committee Area** we surveyed **52138** Hex Cells Of these **17898** - fall within SDAs or the area of Growing Settlements. **2115** Cells contain the 4455 Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells: 77.0% of residential properties are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (2024)** or **Highly Walkable (1407)**; **6.7% of residential properties (296)** have **Few or No Walkable services**.

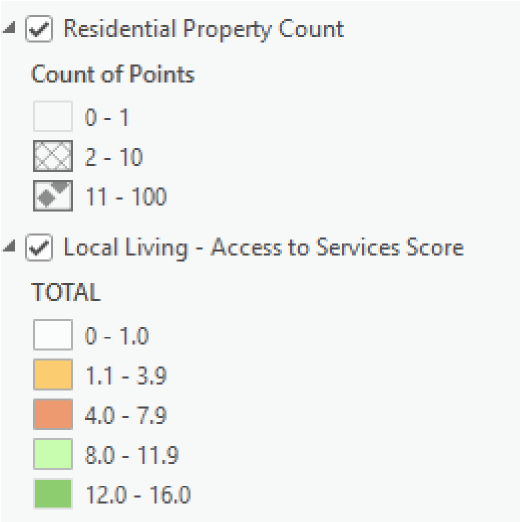
The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in **Lochaber Area Committee Area** is **10.5** (out of a maximum possible of 16)

Brora SDA has the highest average residential score (at **13.1** per property); **Invershin Growing Settlement** has the lowest average residential property score with an average of **3.0**

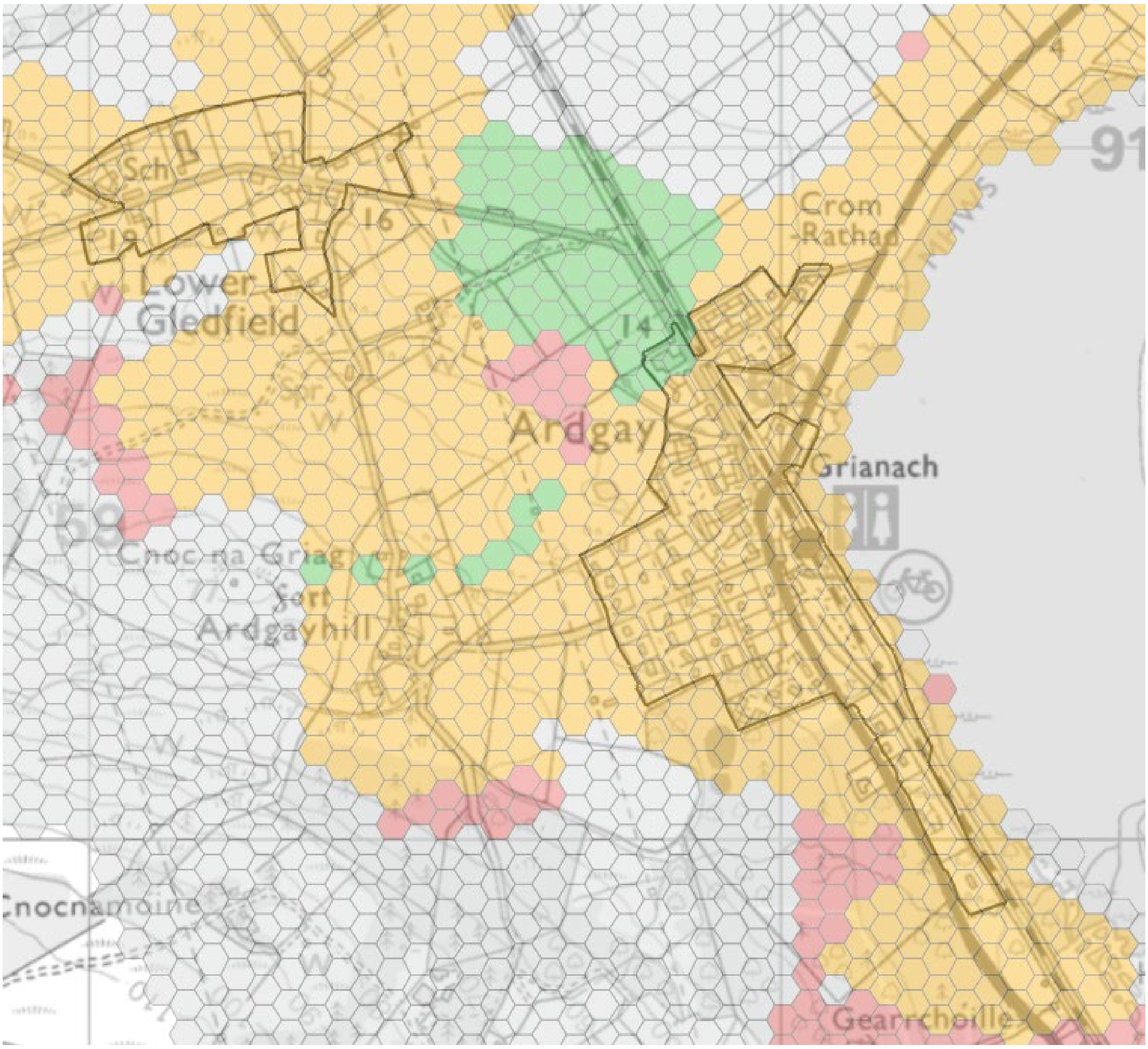
		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties						Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Name	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Tota	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
GS	Durness	2680	112	151	934.4	6.2	10.6	1.35	0	69	31	47	4	151	0.0%	45.7%	20.5%	31.1%	2.6%
GS	Melness	2955	72	95	362.2	3.8	6.4	1.32	0	0	50	36	9	95	0.0%	0.0%	52.6%	37.9%	9.5%
GS	Melvich	1432	32	43	246.6	5.7	6.8	1.34	0	0	34	9	0	43	0.0%	0.0%	79.1%	20.9%	0.0%
GS	Portskerra	756	70	106	898.6	8.5	9.8	1.51	0	76	25	4	1	106	0.0%	71.7%	23.6%	3.8%	0.9%
GS	Scourie	1450	60	99	747.2	7.5	11	1.65	0	58	33	4	4	99	0.0%	58.6%	33.3%	4.0%	4.0%
GS	Bettyhill	1212	72	100	971.4	9.7	11.4	1.39	0	82	5	3	10	100	0.0%	82.0%	5.0%	3.0%	10.0%
SDA	Bonar Bridge	271	116	248	3091	12.5	13.8	2.14	135	108	5	0	0	248	54.4%	43.5%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Dornoch	851	348	820	8873.6	10.8	15.4	2.36	518	126	59	72	45	820	63.2%	15.4%	7.2%	8.8%	5.5%
SDA	Edderton	191	38	62	370.6	6.0	6.8	1.63	0	0	62	0	0	62	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Embo	263	60	154	1231.2	8.0	8	2.57	0	152	2	0	0	154	0.0%	98.7%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Golspie	828	291	731	8991	12.3	15.8	2.51	453	195	55	27	1	731	62.0%	26.7%	7.5%	3.7%	0.1%
GS	Invershin	280	8	8	24	3.0	3	1.00	0	0	0	8	0	8	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
GS	Kinlochbervie	1055	61	115	989	8.6	10.8	1.89	0	78	37	0	0	115	0.0%	67.8%	32.2%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Lairg	445	129	267	2713.6	10.2	14	2.07	79	148	39	1	0	267	29.6%	55.4%	14.6%	0.4%	0.0%
SDA	Lochinver	733	88	204	1687.8	8.3	13.6	2.32	12	100	89	3	0	204	5.9%	49.0%	43.6%	1.5%	0.0%
GS	Rosehall	950	23	38	167	4.4	4.6	1.65	0	0	35	3	0	38	0.0%	0.0%	92.1%	7.9%	0.0%
SDA	Tongue	196	38	65	701.2	10.8	10.8	1.71	0	65	0	0	0	65	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Brora	759	281	686	9016	13.1	14.4	2.44	584	75	22	5	0	686	85.1%	10.9%	3.2%	0.7%	0.0%
SDA	Helmsdale	365	133	319	4076.4	12.8	13.4	2.40	243	74	2	0	0	319	76.2%	23.2%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Ardgay	226	83	144	857.0	6.0	8.4	1.73	0	1	143	0	0	144	0.0%	0.7%	99.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	Grand Total	**17898**	**2115**	**4455**	**46949.8**	**10.5**	**15.8**	**2.11**	**2024**	**1407**	**728**	**222**	**74**	**4455**	**45.4%**	**31.6%**	**16.3%**	**5.0%**	**1.7%**

Sutherland Area Profile

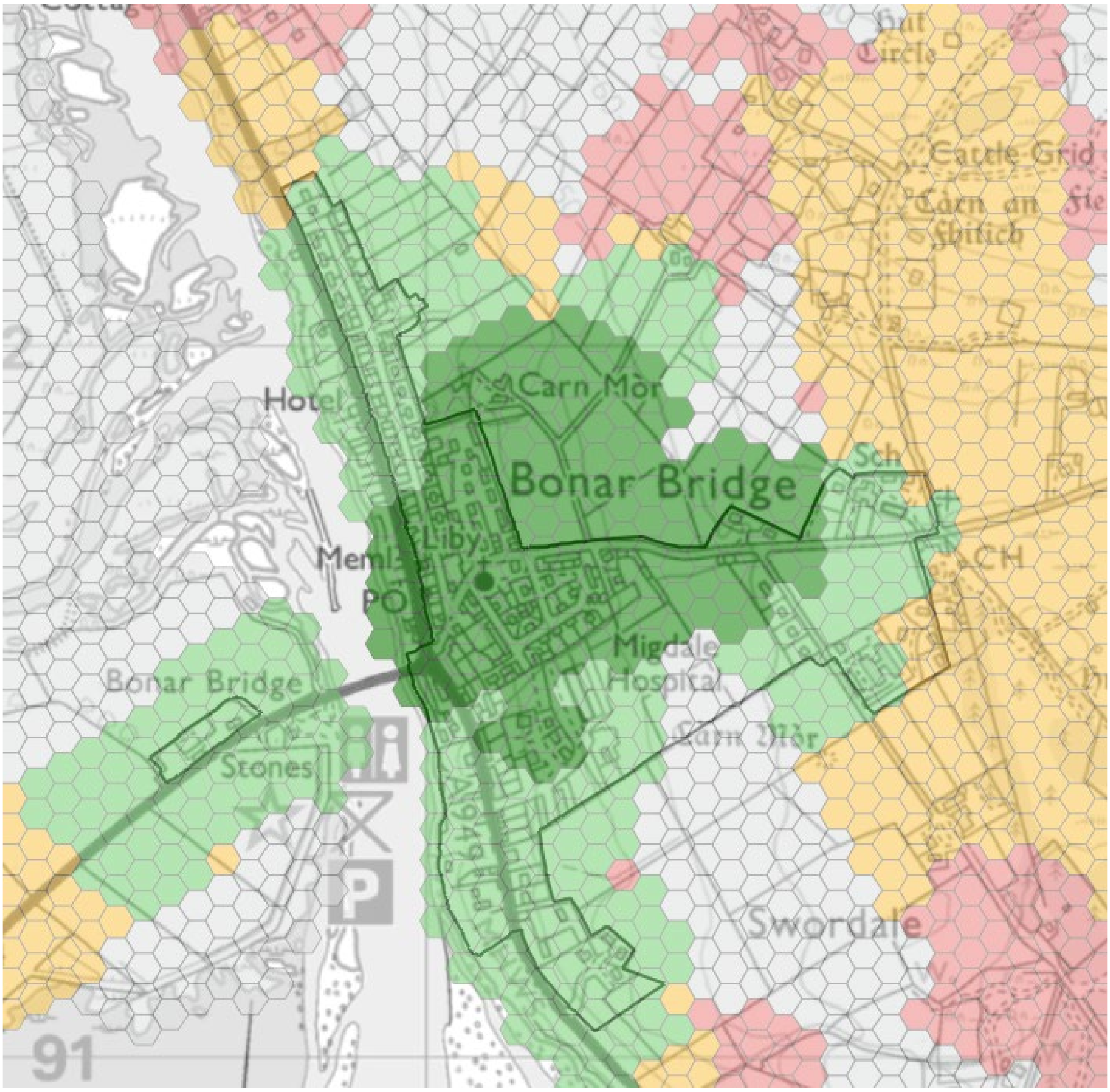
Appendix – Local Living Outcomes Maps for Main Settlements



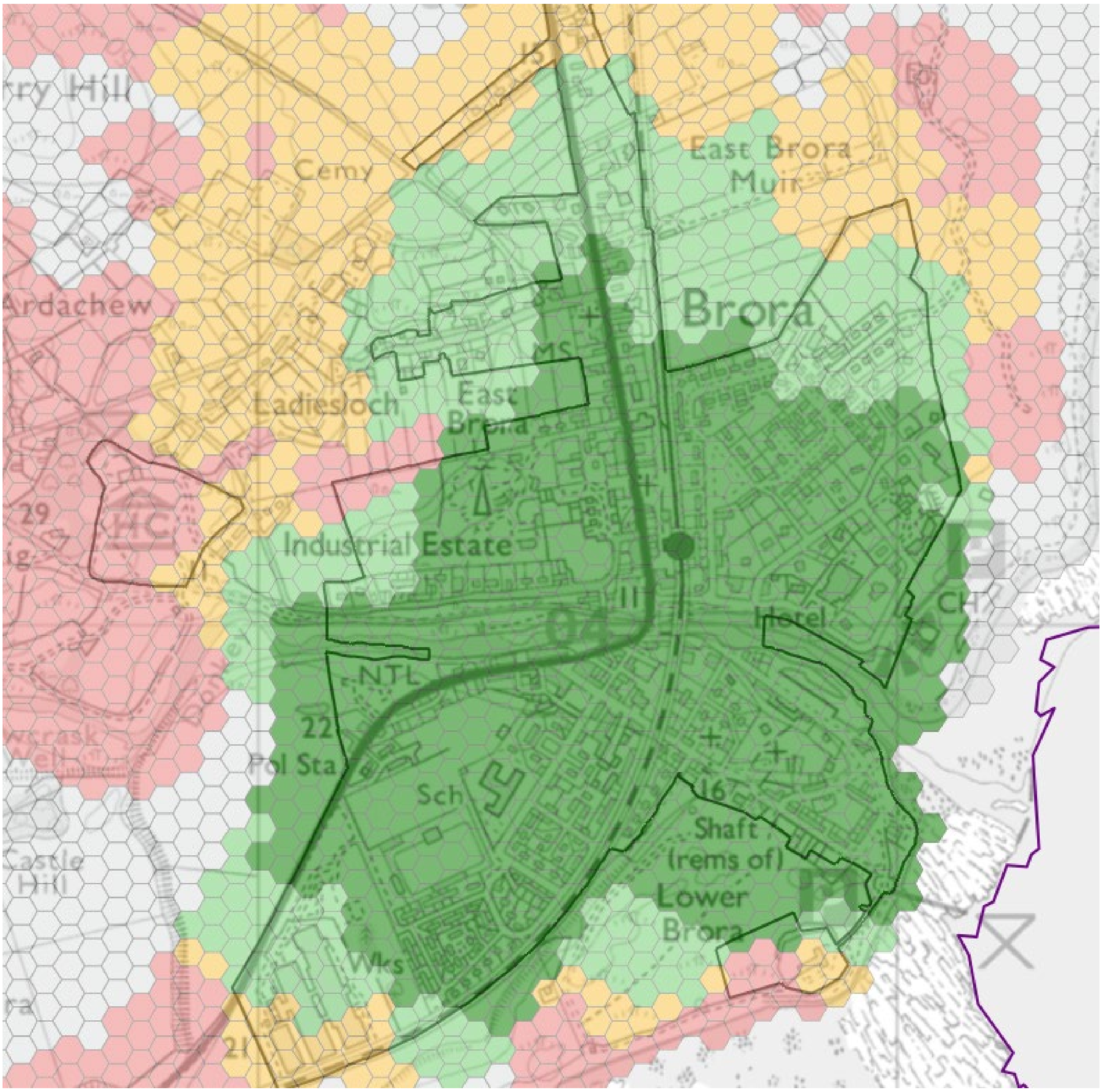
Ardgay



Bonar Bridge

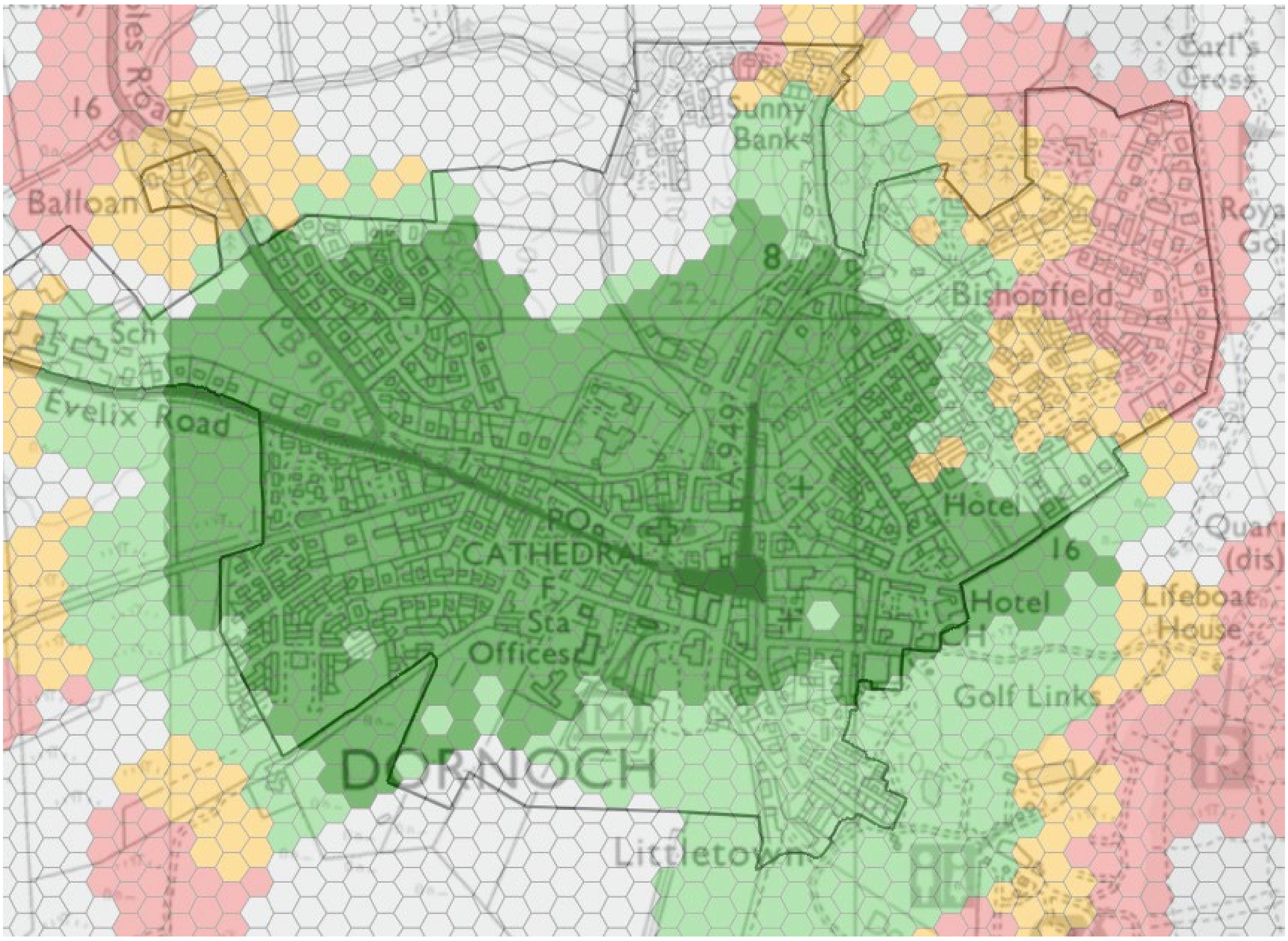


Brora

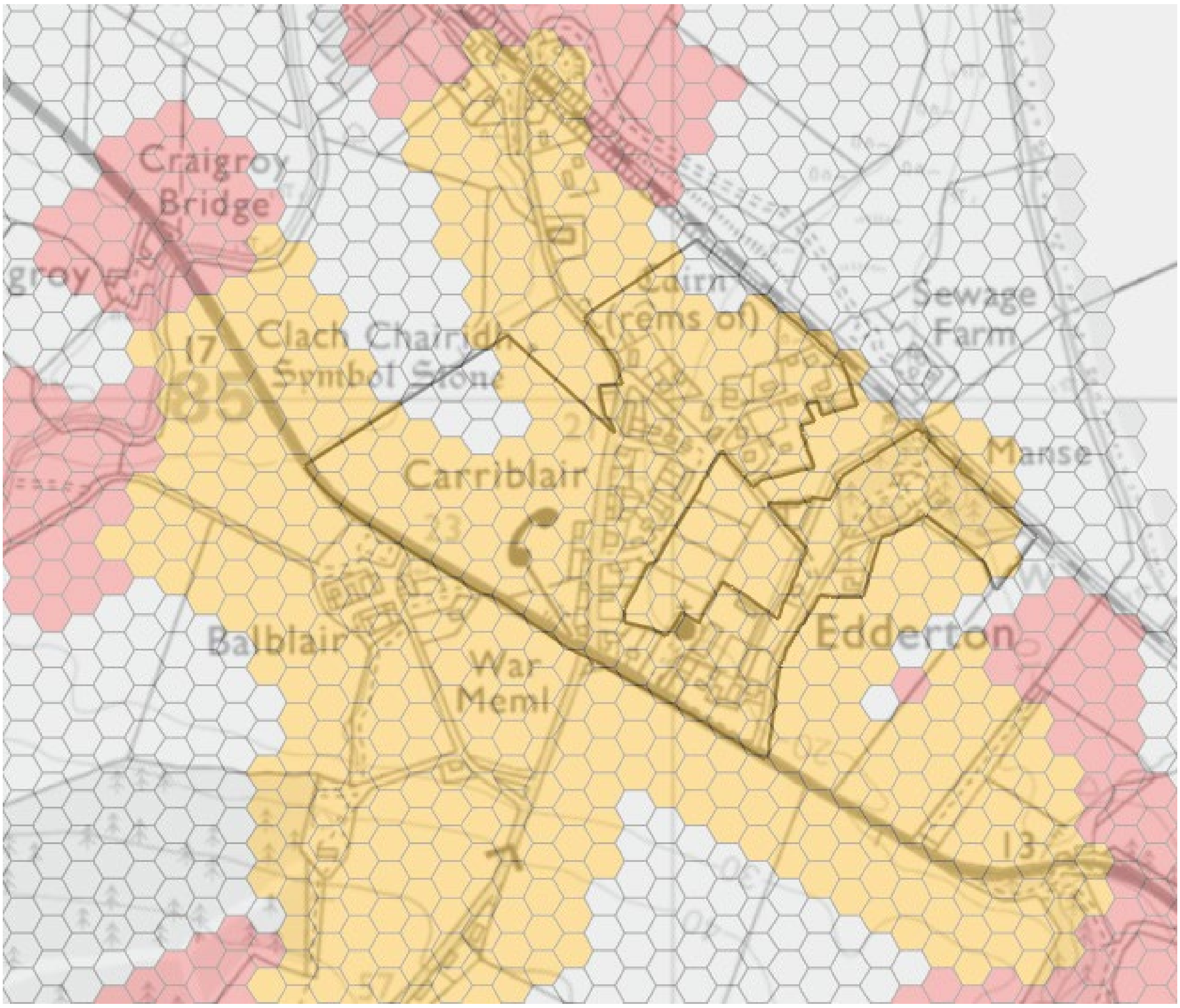


East Brora
Muir
Brora
Cemy
Ardachew
Ladiesloch
East
Brora
Industrial Estate
29
HC
NTL
22
Pol Sta
Sch
Wks
Hotel
CH
16
Shaft
(rems of)
Lower
Brora
Castle
Hill
21

Dornoch

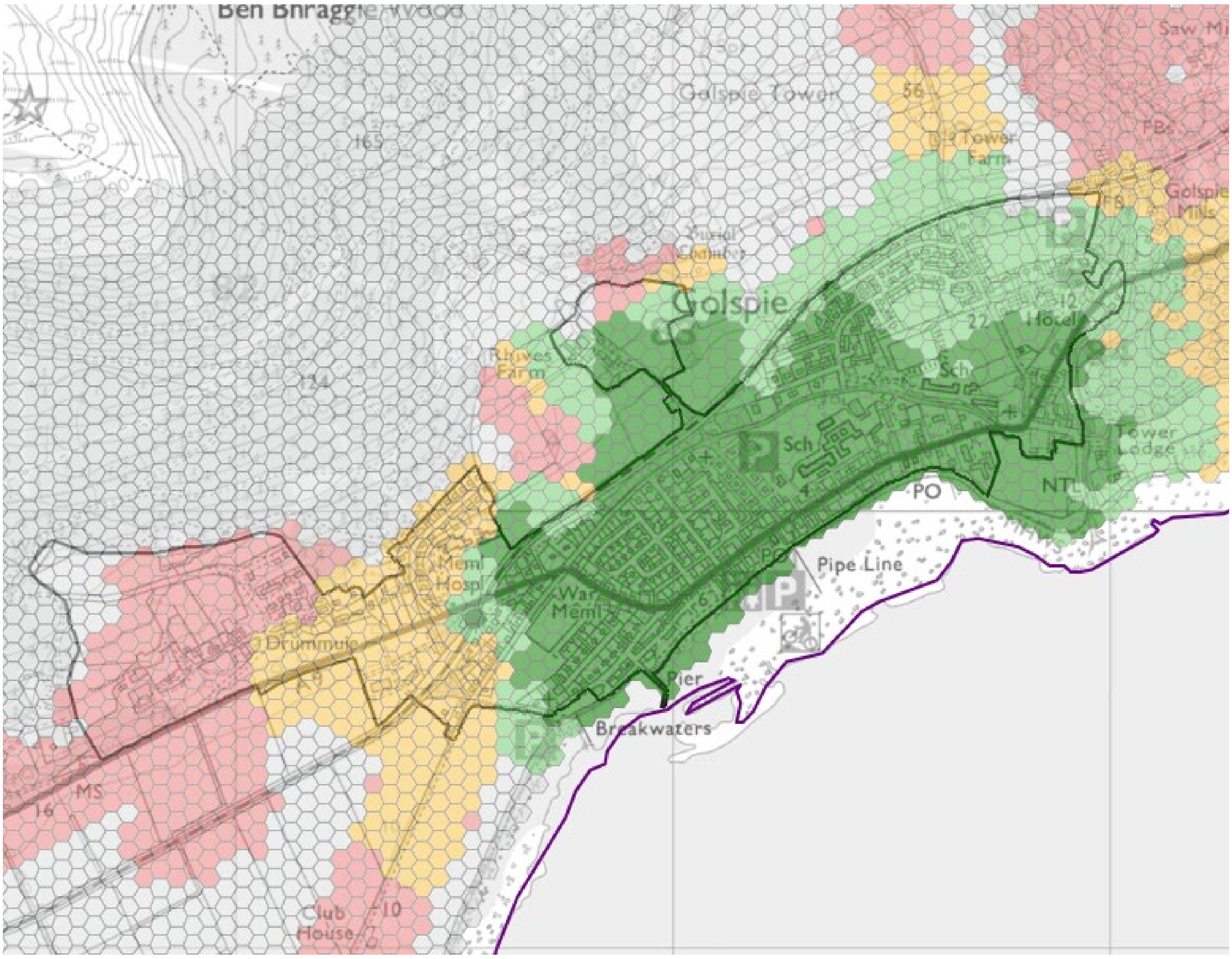

16
Balloan
Sch
Evelix Road
B9168
Sunny Bank
8
22
Bishopfield
A949
Hotel
PO
CATHEDRAL
F
Sta
Offices
Hotel
16
Lifeboat House
Golf Links
DORNOCH
Littletown

Edderton

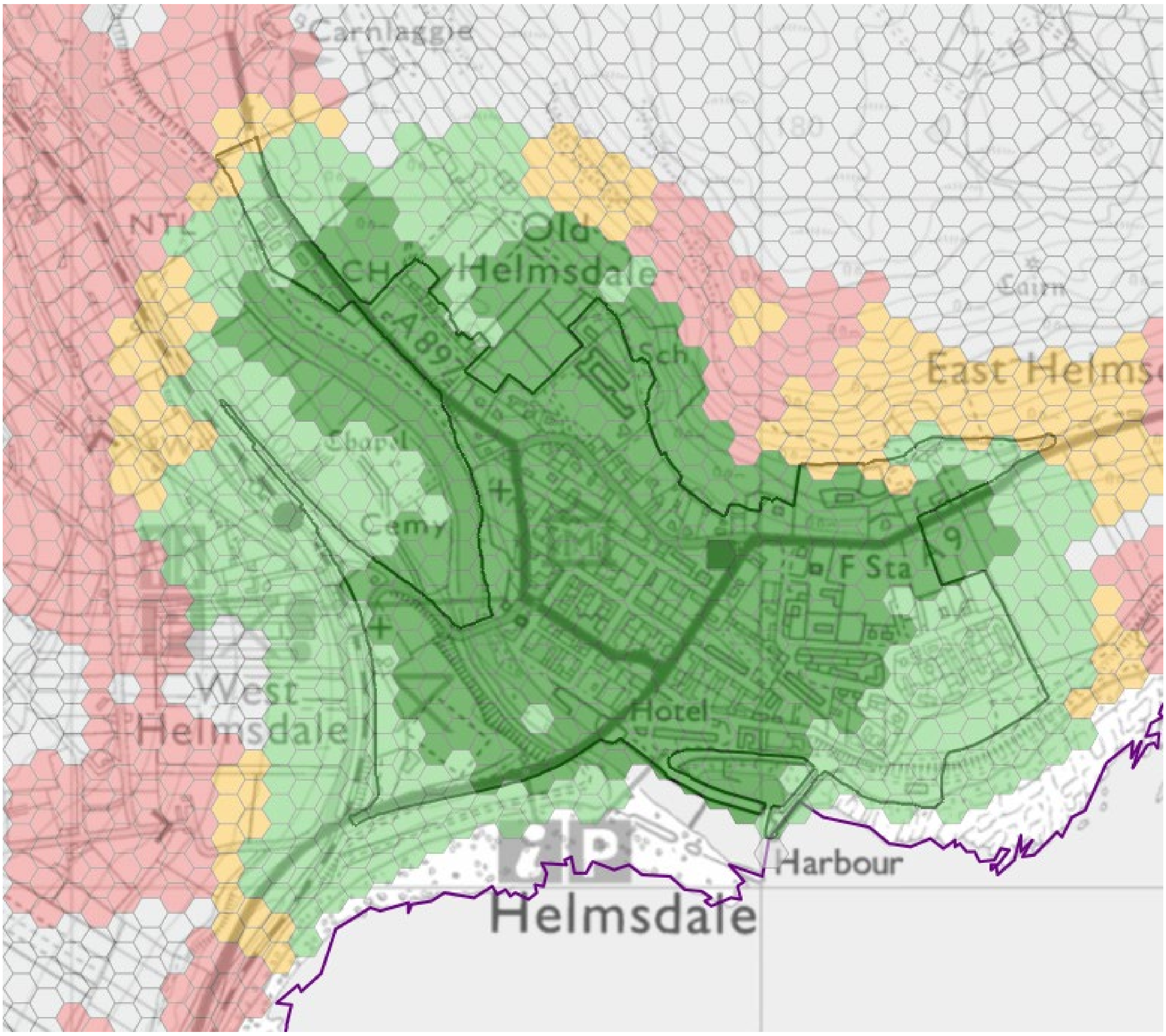


Craigroy
Bridge
Clach Chairidh
Symbol Stone
Cairn
(rems of)
Sewage
Farm
Manse
Carriblair
Balblair
War
Meml
Edderton

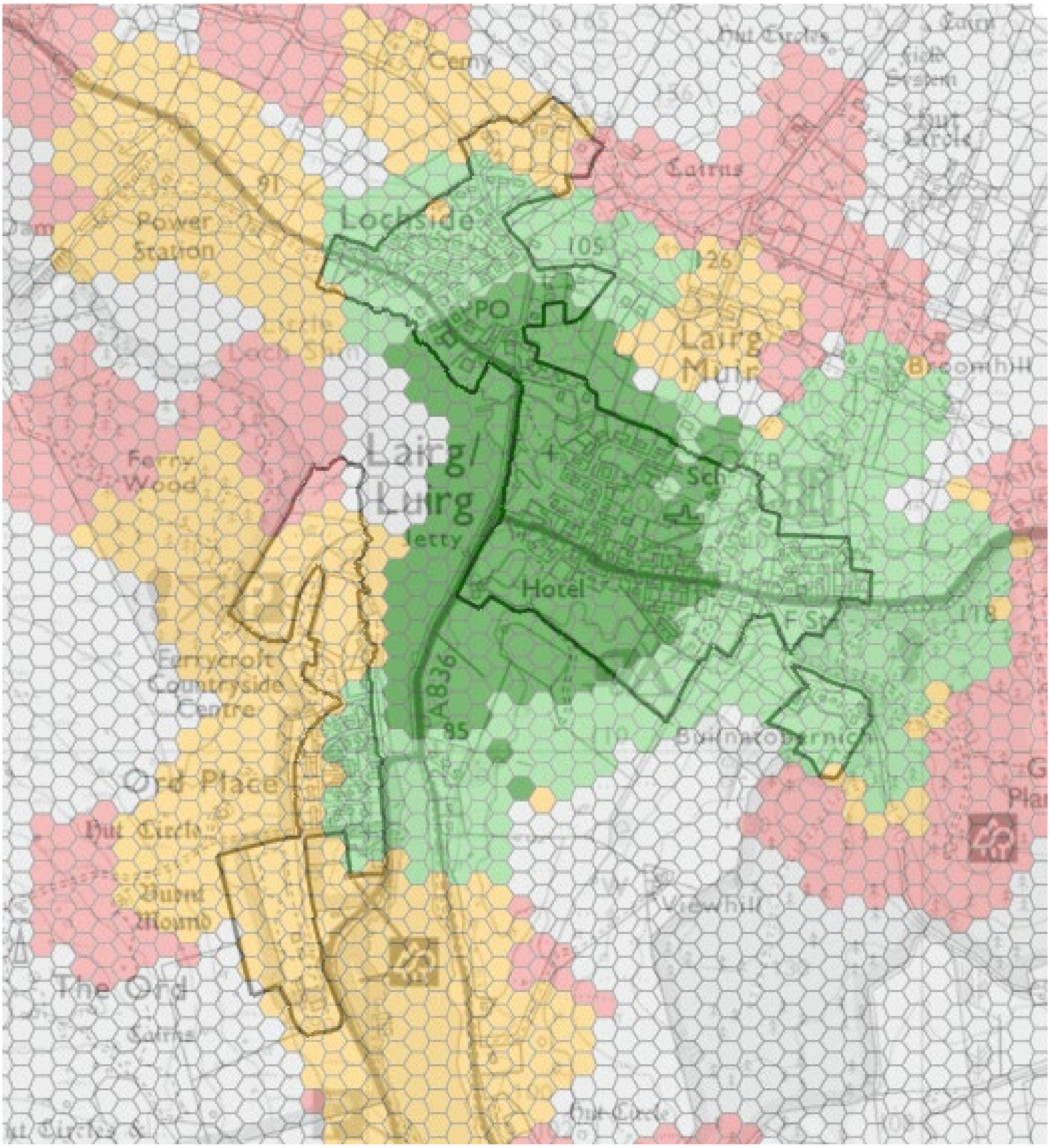
Golspie


Golspie
Golspie Tower
Tower Farm
Golspie Mills
Saw Mi
FBs
Hotel
Sch
Tower Lodge
PO
NTL
Pipe Line
Pier
Breakwaters
War Meml
Meml Hosp
Drummuie
MS
Club House
165
124
56
22
12
16
10

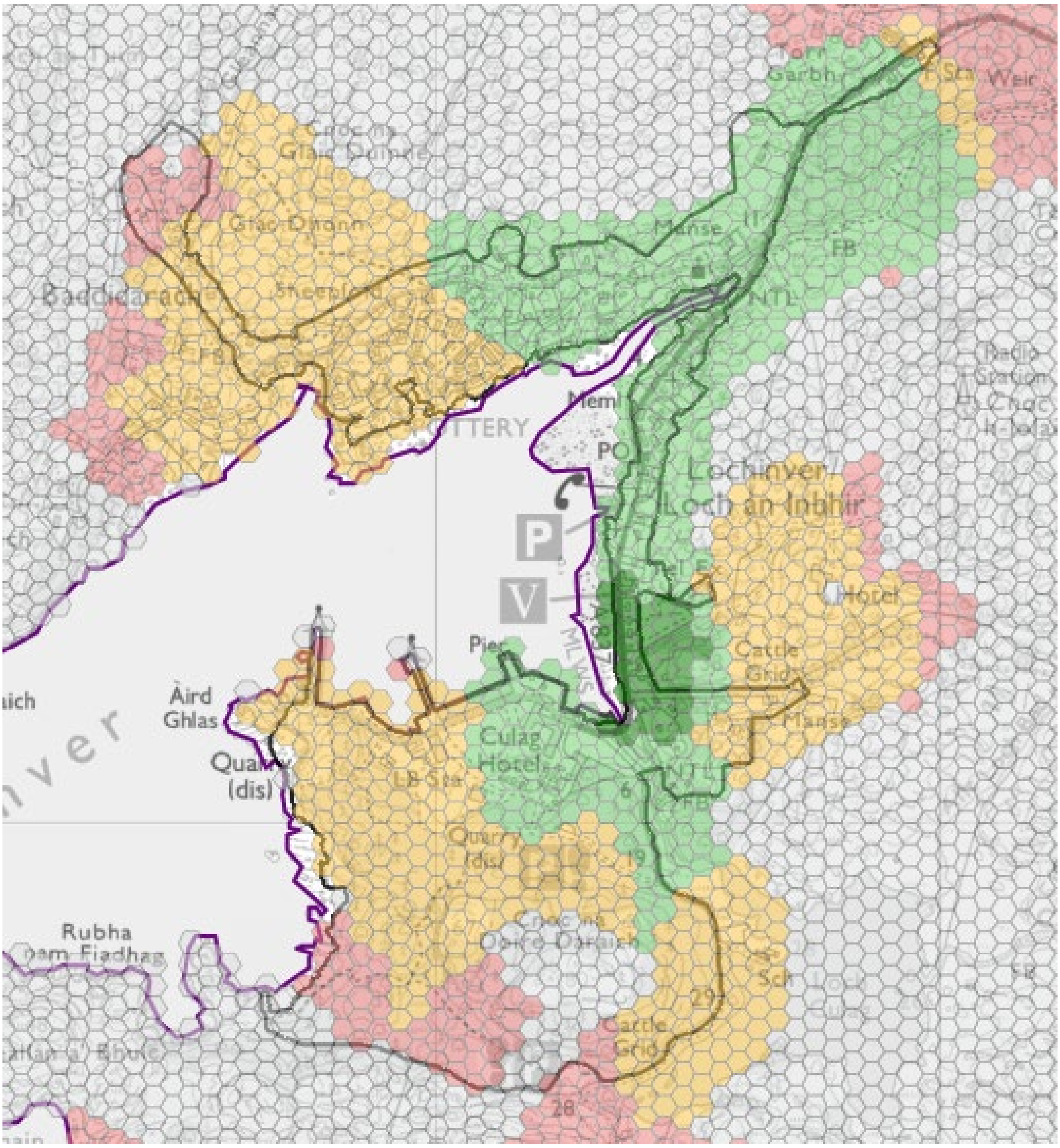
Helmsdale


Carnlaggie
NTL
Old
CH
Helmsdale
A897
Sch
East Helms
Chapel
Cemy
F Sta
West
Helmsdale
Hotel
Harbour
Helmsdale
Cairn

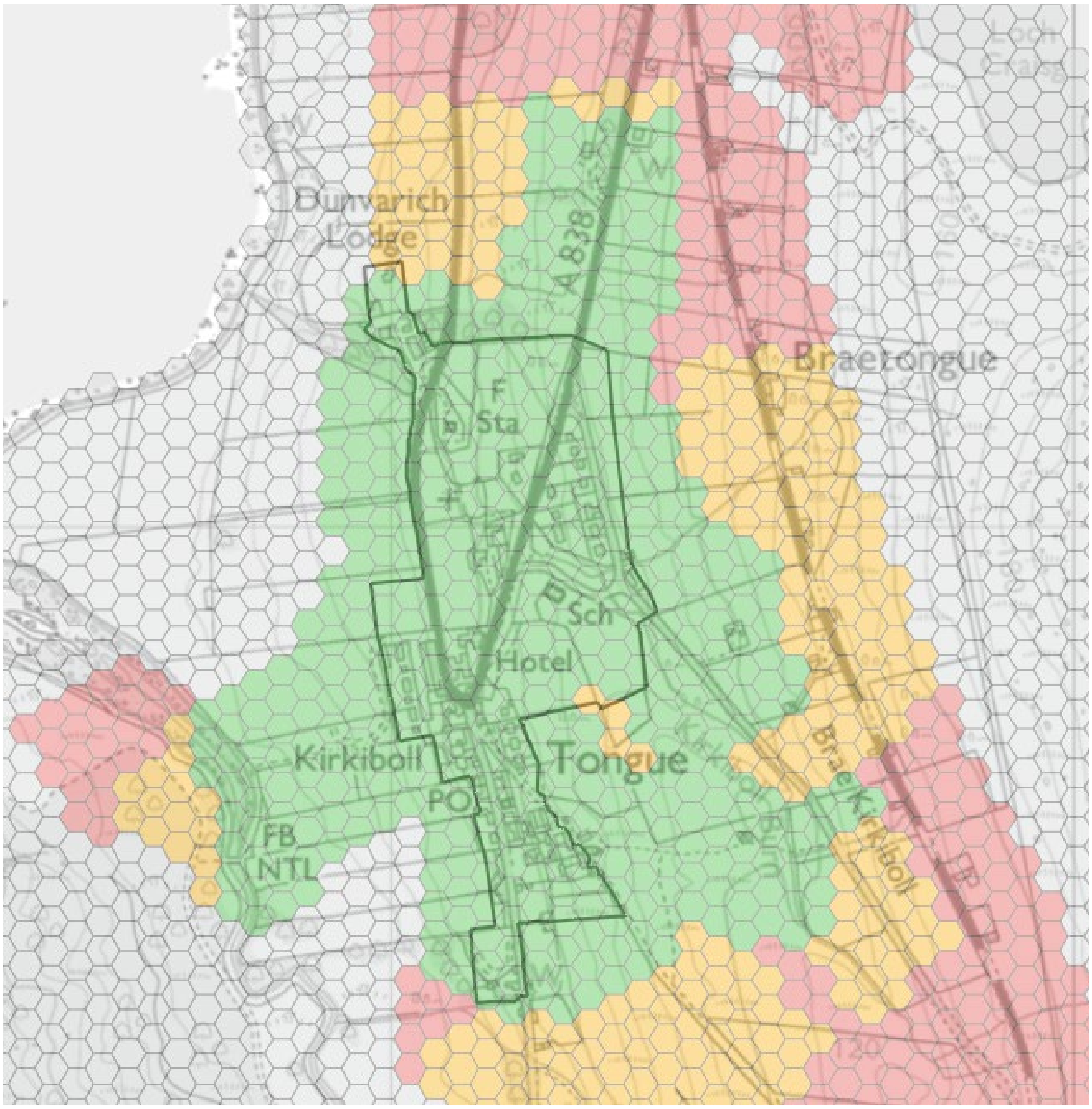
Lairg


Lochside
Power
Station
Lairg
Muir
Lairg
Ferry
Wood
Hotel
Ferrycroft
Countryside
Centre
Ord Place
Hut Circle
The Ord
Viewhill
A836

Lochinver


Baddidarrach
Lochinver
Loch an Inbhir
Hotel
Cattle Grid
Manse
Pier
Àird Ghlas
Culag Hotel
Quarry (dis)
LB Sta
Rubha
Radio Station
Sch
28
29

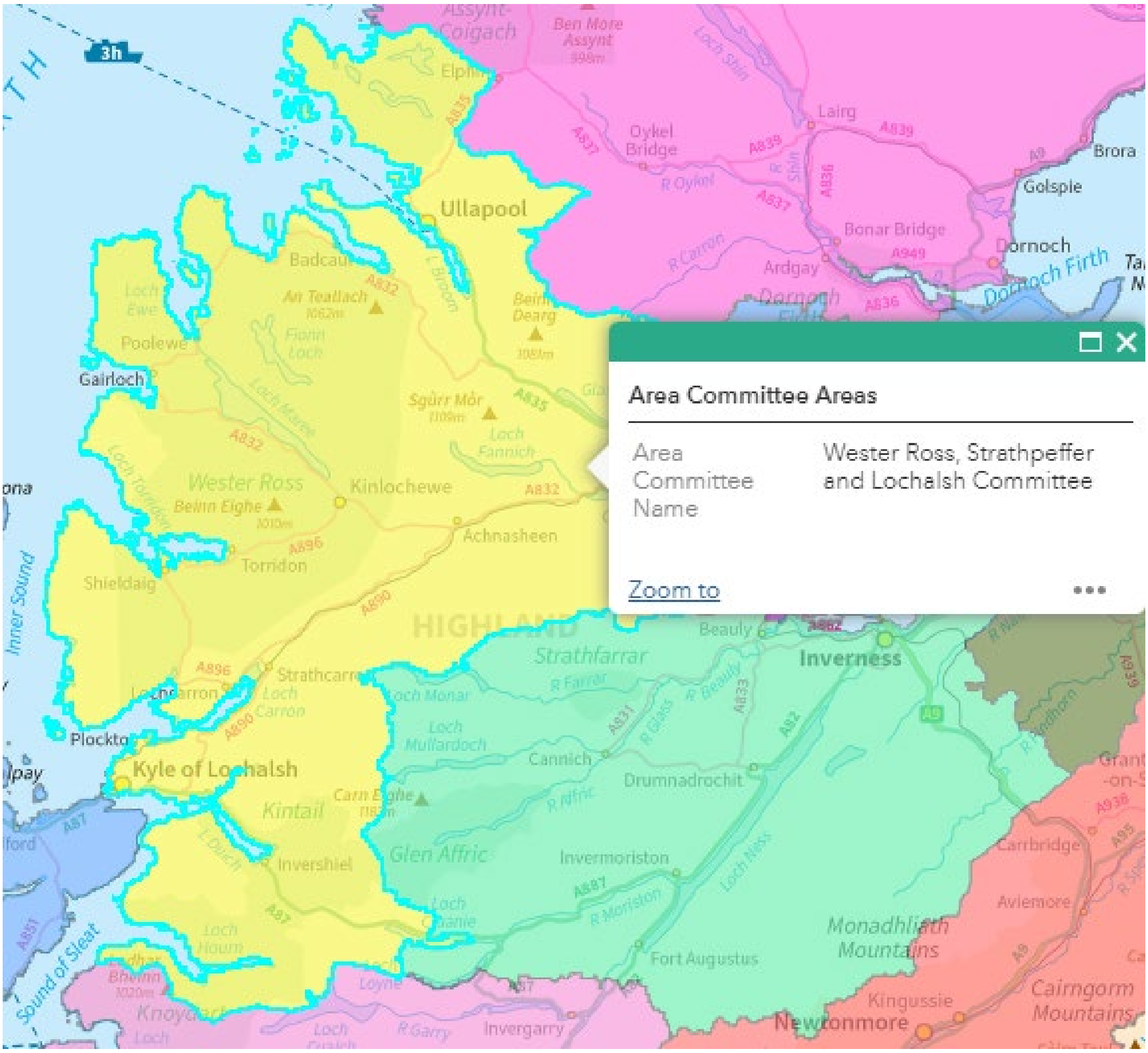
Tongue



Dunvarich
Lodge
A 838
Braetongue
F
Sta
Sch
Hotel
Kirkiboll
Tongue
PO
FB
NTL
Brae Kirkiboll

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Area Profile

1 Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh (WRSL) Area Boundary



2 Character of the Area

The principal settlements are (main settlements defined within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 and West Highland & Islands Local Development Plan) Gairloch, Kyle of Lochalsh, Lochcarron, Poolewe, Ullapool and Strathpeffer.

The Committee covers the largest geographic area of any Highland Council ward at 4,948km^2 and almost reaches from coast to coast across Scotland. However, with just over 12,000 permanent residents its population is sparse and to a large degree dispersed. Only 5% of the land area is easy to develop due to physical, servicing and heritage constraints and therefore settlement is concentrated on the coast and/or where marginally more productive agricultural land is available. Because of this population sparsity and dispersal there is no "critical-mass" sized settlement to support higher order local facilities such as a hospital, further education or a large supermarket. Conversely, this rurality and the area's exceptional natural heritage quality is attractive to visitors and new in-migrants. The Area continues to attract tourists, early retirees, home workers, and second/holiday homeowners. The lack of regular and reliable public transport connectivity to larger centres has led to a high reliance on private car journeys and the harmful emissions associated with such travel. Even these are disrupted by the road network capacity constraints described in section 4 below. More positively, this fragility has made local communities self-sufficient, socially cohesive, and resilient. A strong cultural identity based on crofting and the Gaelic language underpins this resilience.

Key factual information is set out in Section 4 below.

3 How well does the Area function?

The Area's unique selling point is the extent and quality of its natural heritage. As stated above this is both an advantage and a disadvantage. That heritage is important in species, habitats, visual and tourism economy terms but also restricts future development potential. Similarly, the vast majority of the Area is too steep or of too high an altitude to support settlement. Accordingly, development pressure is directed to the 5% of developable land which can undermine the aim of preserving inbye croft land, safeguarding built heritage (for example within the conservation areas of Plockton, Shieldaig, Strathpeffer and Ullapool), and preventing sporadic housing development in the open countryside. Many of the heritage resources overlap the coast and constrain aquaculture and harbour related development and the employment they can provide. A tension remains about whether the Area should accommodate more industrial development (for example at Kishorn) or concentrate on tourism-based employment.

The lack of local employment opportunities but improvements in digital connectivity has led to higher home working but also higher emission commuting and trips to higher order facilities and services, which aren't available within the Area. Innovative solutions are required to reduce this unnecessary travel. Electric vehicle car clubs, online shopping and delivery hubs, digital healthcare, and community transport schemes are all solutions. Both the UK and Scottish Governments have agreed to fund far better digital connectivity to the Area and therefore the range of online solutions will increase.

An important current and future debate is whether all of the Area should be repopulated. Area population levels were far higher in the early 1800s, current national planning policy promotes resettlement, but circumstances have changed and many depopulated Highland glens are not overly suitable in terms of employment, community facilities and infrastructure capacity.

4 "Infrastructure First" Overview & Other Key Facts & Figures

Infrastructure Capacities

- **Digital Connectivity** – as of September 2024 only 4,478 premises in Highland had taken up ultrafast (FFTP or Broadband Voucher scheme for up to 1Gb/s via the R100 contract) broadband. Within the Area there are 8,868 premises 2,667 (30%) of which have the potential to access 1Gb/s speeds, 5,070 (57%) where it may be possible that a commercial provider will provide such speeds within the next 3 years and 1,131 (13%) premises where a public subsidy will be required and that subsidy is currently not programmed.
- **School Capacities** - recently resolved (but developer contributions still payable), physical capacity constraints at Shieldaig Primary - full details via https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/2378/school_roll_forecasts_april_2024.
- **Water & Sewerage Capacities** - there is spare capacity at all of the Main Settlement (Kyle of Lochalsh, Lochcarron, Strathpeffer, Gairloch, Poolewe and Ullapool) sewage and water treatment works within the Area but potential network issues within all settlements for both water and wastewater.
- **Significant Road Capacity Constraints & Investments** – local safety concerns concerning turning movements at particular trunk road junctions (e.g. Ullapool Braes and Auchtertyre). Otherwise, general concerns about road surface, bridge and winter condition of local road network. Many roads are lifeline facilities to remote rural communities with no practicable alternative route, for example, the closure of the South Strome to Lochcarron section of the A890 due to rockfalls risks a significant increase in emergency vehicle response times. Many of the A roads still have single track sections and previous capital programme commitments to dual track further parts of the A890 and A832 have been removed.
- **Health Facility Capacity** – there is no hospital provision within the Area other than the Howard Doris Centre at Lochcarron which offers a range of healthcare but to a limited number of people. There are 8 GP practice groups serving the Area and all but the Strathpeffer Medical Practice have (July 2024) patients per GP numbers below the Highland average of 770 patients per GP.

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Area Profile

Other Key Facts & Figures

- **Population Total** - (Census 2022) 12,196 (5.2% of Highland population).
- **Population Change** - (Census 2011-2022) -0.4% population loss compared to Scotland and Highland growth (Scotland +2.7%, Highland +1.4%).
- **Age profile** (Census 2022) 0-16 (14.3%) 65+ (28.0%) (lower proportion of young and higher proportion of old than Highland and significantly older age profile than Scotland average) – however falling birth rates and numbers is a general trend with the number of live births at Raigmore Hospital dropping 16.5% from a peak of 2,140 in 2008/2009 to 1,787 in 2022/2023.
- **Proportion of Homes within Main Settlements** (Council Tax Data 2023) 50.6%.
- **Households** – (Census 2022) 5,892 occupied households.
- **House Completions** - long term average 57 per year which is 5% of Highland long term average completions – full details via https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/f827c80f82364d7b82ba5eca454f9f5e.
- **Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock** – (Scottish Govt FOI Release 2024) – Area has a similar (9.7%) proportion than Highland (10.1%) of residential accommodation with best A or B Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Rating but a much higher (23%) proportion than Highland (13%) with the worst EPC rating of F or G.
- **Poverty** – the most recent Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) highlights that most parts of the Area are in the least deprived 50% of zones in Scotland albeit there are small pockets of deprivation within Strathpeffer, Garve, Achnasheen, Kinlochewe and Kyle of Lochalsh - full details via https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/13/-4.2280/57.4670/.
- **Visitors to Highland** – a 2023 Visit Scotland survey of 1,041 overnight visitors to Highland found that half were international and half from the UK – most (75%) were older or retired – the most popular reason for choosing to visit was the scenery/landscape – half stayed in serviced accommodation – hiking and visiting castles were the top attractions and activities.
- **Employment** – (the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh Area is made up of part of the Broadford & Kyle of Lochalsh, Ullapool, and Inverness Travel to Work Areas [TTWAs]) – 2023 data indicated that within the Broadford & Kyle of Lochalsh TTWA gross average weekly full time pay of £565.30 and within the Ullapool TTWA gross average weekly full time pay of £630.70.
- **Working from Home & Commuting** – (Ward data from Census 2022) – 35.1% of the workforce work mainly from home (higher than Highland and Scotland averages) and 39.1% commute more than 10km to work (higher than the Highland and Scotland averages).
- **Unemployment** – (Highland June 2024) 3,235 or 2.2% of economically active.
- **Employment sectors** – (2020 HIE data for Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross area) the top 3 employment sectors are: human health and social work (12.5%), wholesale and retail (12.8%) and accommodation and food services (25.0%).
- **Environmental and other constraints** - 95% of the Area is covered by significant development constraint in terms of altitude, future flooding, national environmental, or international environmental designation (NSA, SAC, SPA, NNR, SSSI, Peatland [Class 1 & 2], TPO, Ancient Woodland Inventory, land over 370m, being over 500m from the adopted road network, future 1 in 200 year fluvial and coastal flood risk areas and current 1 in 200 year pluvial areas).

5 Place Plans & Outcomes

The following plans and documents contain a range of community and community partnership priorities that will be considered in shaping the plan content for the area.

Local Place Plan details via
https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=01a0cf2180c64c2cb8dc71dc22bbbfe1

Completed (and Registered)
None to date

In Preparation
Gairloch Local Place Plan
Torridon and Kinlochewe Local Place Plan
Garve and District Local Place Plan
Contin Local Place Plan

Wester Ross Biosphere is currently finalising the preparation of an Area Place Plan (APP) which collates an overview of local priorities development, investment and service delivery across the area - identified through stakeholder and public engagement, in addition to reviewing the content of existing plans and strategies across public and community partners. Working towards completion by end of 2024, the APP will comprise a key source of evidence for consideration in development planning, future service delivery and community action.

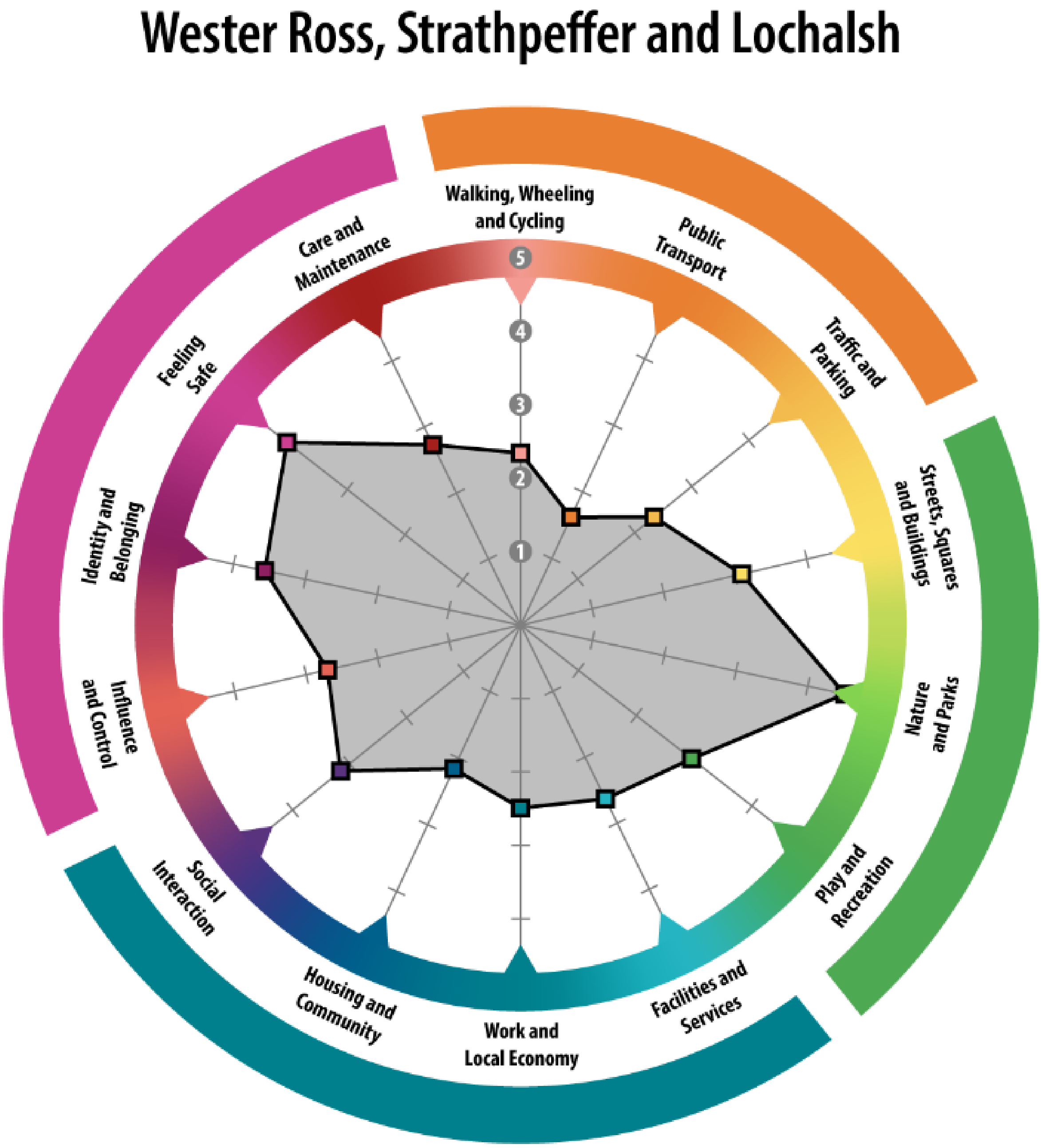
Community Partnership Plan
Skye, Lochalsh & Wester Ross Community Partnership has been set up to bring together key public sector bodies, third sector organisations, and other key groups and agencies to work collaboratively to tackle inequalities and prevent disadvantage across the area. By working together to identify priorities, share resources and improve the lives of residents and the services they receive, the CP is the forum for partners to come together to actively work towards improving the lives of residents across the area.

The Community Partnership has not prepared a Locality Plan for this Area but has endorsed several community action/development plans – details via https://highlandcpp.org.uk/community-partnerships/skye-lochalsh-west-ross-community-partnership/ .

6 Place Standard

Public perceptions of the physical and social aspects of place were scored on a scale of 1-5 (very poor to very good).

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Area Profile



Area Average Score (2.9) is equivalent to the Highland average score across sub-regional areas.

Area response rate for the Place Standard Survey: 83 online responses, plus 76 young people engaged in HLH facilitated sessions.

Highest scores for area: *Nature & Parks* (4.5); *Feeling Safe* (4.1); *Identity & Belonging (Pride in Place)* (3.6)

Lowest scores for area: *Public Transport* (1.6); *Housing & Community* (2.2); *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.3)

Domains for which WRSL compares well with rest of Highland:

- *Nature & Parks* (4.5) scored joint highest in Highland.

- *Identity & Belonging (Pride in Place)* (3.6) scored joint second highest in Highland.
- *Feeling Safe* (4.1) scored third highest in Highland.

Domains for which WRSL scores low compared with rest of Highland:

- *Public Transport* (1.6) scored joint lowest in Highland.
- *Work & Local Economy* (2.5) scored joint lowest in Highland.
- *Housing & Community* (2.2) scored second lowest in Highland.
- *Walking, Wheeling & Cycling* (2.3) scored third lowest in Highland.

Qualitative Feedback

Positive Aspects

- Community ownership of land and buildings was celebrated for conserving local assets. This is proposed as a means of mitigating the impact of vacant and derelict buildings, which may be considered for community use, or regeneration as housing.
- The natural environment is held as the area's key asset, providing opportunities for conservation of wildlife, recreation, tourism. However, concerns were also raised about the detrimental impact of tourism on natural areas – including litter, human waste and irresponsible camping.
- Local facilities, such as schools, halls, health and community centres, and their dedicated staff are considered vital to sustaining rural life. However, concerns raised about limited opening hours of most services and a lack of dentists and post offices.

Areas for improvement

- Frequent concerns about inadequate public transport.
- Calls for more varied housing options, including social and community owned housing and better maintenance of existing housing stock (particularly for energy efficiency). Shortage of affordable housing is major barrier to attracting and retaining workers. There is significant frustration over second home ownership and holiday rentals' impact on property prices and limiting availability to locals.
- There is a heavy reliance on seasonal, low-paying jobs, primarily in tourism. However, community initiatives to improve digital connectivity in some areas have enhanced opportunities for self-employment and remote working.
- Demand for improved signage, public toilets and other amenities to support both locals and visitors, such as outdoor seating, public toilets, recreational areas, including designated picnic/BBQ areas and play areas for older children.
- Many areas face challenges with lack of designated pavements and poor road maintenance, including potholes and single track roads.
- Tourist traffic is regarded as making it particularly hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists, with calls for introduction of more lay-bys and dedicated parking for large vehicles.
- There are calls for stricter control of campervan parking, path maintenance and 'outdoor etiquette'.
- General opposition to development of wind farms and associated infrastructure.
- Some residents feel the area's emergency response services are insufficiently resourced to handle current needs - particularly road safety and traffic concerns.

Youth concerns arising from HLH workshops:

- Need for increased affordable housing for young people and families to prevent out-migration from the area.
- Desire for meaningful year-round employment opportunities out with tourism.
- Improved off-road cycle routes for recreational cycling in the Gairloch area.
- Improved pavements and segregated cycle lanes within settlements. Repair of potholes to reduce risks to other road users when drivers 'swerve' to avoid them.
- Highly limited extent of bus services to Inverness makes it infeasible to attend employment and further educational opportunities without dependence on a car for travel.
- Desire for a shuttle bus service between local settlements to access activities and social opportunities.
- Need for sheltered seating in central locations of settlements, where many children often wait for long periods to be collected by car.

7 Local Living Outcomes

In the area of the **Wester Ross Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee Area** we surveyed **45647** Hex Cells

Of these **20361** - fall within SDAs or the area of Growing Settlements
1954 Cells contain the **3650** Residential properties in the area (Residential Cells)

Within these Residential Cells:

55.6% of residential properties are in cells classified as either **Very Highly Walkable (1142)** or **Highly Walkable (886)**
9.7% of residential properties (357) have **Few or No Walkable services**

The **Average Local Living Total score** for a Residential Property in one of these Residential Cells in **Lochaber Area Committee Area** Is **9.0** (out of a maximum possible of 16)

Kyle of Lochalsh SDA has the highest average residential score (at **12.3** per property)
Dornie Growing Settlement has the lowest average residential property score with an average of **4.6**

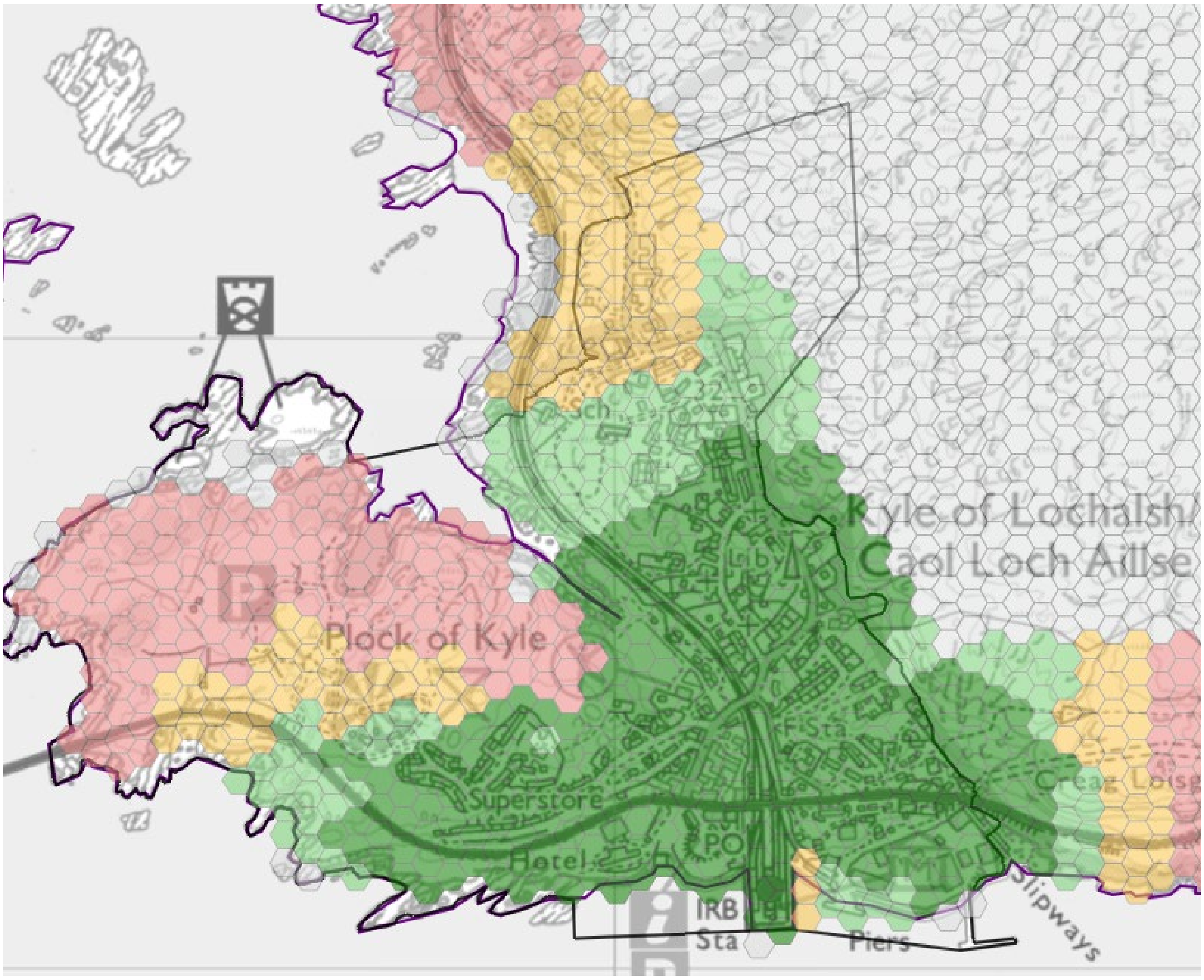
Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Area Profile

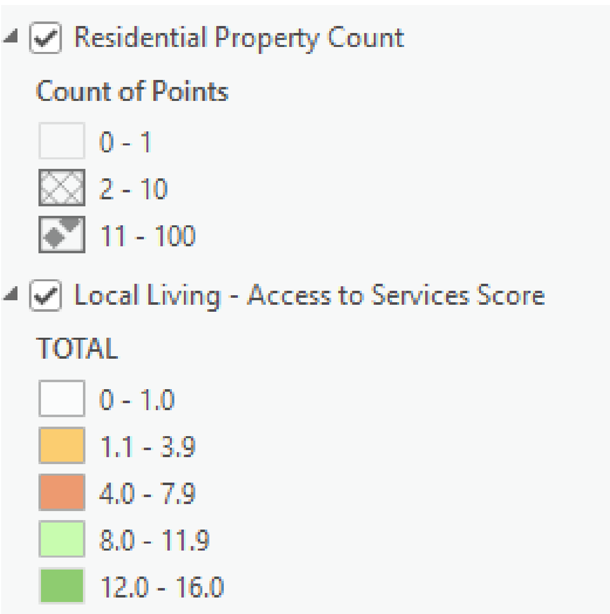
		Count of Cells		Council Tax Registered Properties @ Sept 2023					Count of Residential Properties						Percentage of Residential Properties				
SDA or Growing Settlement (GS)	Name	Hex Cells in SDA/GS	Residential Cells	Residential Properties	Total LL Score x Residential Count	Average Residential Property Score	Highest LL Score	Overall Residential Density (for Residential Cells in SDA/GS)	Very High Number of Walkable (VHW)	High Number of Walkable Services (HWS)	Some Walkable Services (SWS)	Few Walkable Services (FWS)	none	Grand Tota	VHW	HWS	SWS	FWS	none
GS	Auchtertyre	126	17	26	130	5.0	5	1.53	0	0	26	0	0	26	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Aultbea	1181	90	134	834.2	6.2	8.4	1.49	0	8	120	6	0	134	0.0%	6.0%	89.6%	4.5%	0.0%
GS	Balmacara and Reraig	2422	65	116	655.4	5.7	6.6	1.78	0	0	109	6	1	116	0.0%	0.0%	94.0%	5.2%	0.9%
SDA	Contin	1569	107	176	933.2	5.3	6.4	1.64	0	0	155	17	4	176	0.0%	0.0%	88.1%	9.7%	2.3%
GS	Dornie	1520	105	168	777.6	4.6	6.8	1.60	0	0	123	25	20	168	0.0%	0.0%	73.2%	14.9%	11.9%
SDA	Gairloch	1481	284	412	3194.2	7.8	15	1.45	109	79	134	5	85	412	26.5%	19.2%	32.5%	1.2%	20.6%
SDA	Garve	2914	45	67	279	4.2	5.2	1.49	0	0	42	22	3	67	0.0%	0.0%	62.7%	32.8%	4.5%
GS	Glenelg	1494	59	82	631.2	7.7	10.4	1.39	0	53	10	10	9	82	0.0%	64.6%	12.2%	12.2%	11.0%
SDA	Kyle of Lochalsh	683	138	372	4576.4	12.3	14.8	2.70	301	63	8	0	0	372	80.9%	16.9%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Lochcarron	1510	224	359	2644.2	7.4	11.4	1.60	0	129	174	45	11	359	0.0%	35.9%	48.5%	12.5%	3.1%
SDA	Marybank	574	48	86	636.4	7.4	7.4	1.79	0		86	0	0	86	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Plockton	1329	82	176	1329	7.6	9.4	2.15	0	98	78	0	0	176	0.0%	55.7%	44.3%	0.0%	0.0%
SDA	Poolewe	562	77	132	1017.2	7.7	8.8	1.71	0	96	20	15	1	132	0.0%	72.7%	15.2%	11.4%	0.8%
SDA	Strathpeffer	508	239	494	5374	10.9	13.6	2.07	232	237	25	0	0	494	47.0%	48.0%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
GS	Torridon	1097	32	46	281.8	6.1	7	1.44	0	0	41	5	0	46	0.0%	0.0%	89.1%	10.9%	0.0%
SDA	Ullapool	1391	341	804	9427.8	11.7	15.2	2.36	500	123	114	21	46	804	62.2%	15.3%	14.2%	2.6%	5.7%
	Grand Total	**20361**	**1953**	**3650**	**32721.6**	**9.0**	**15.2**	**1.87**	**1142**	**886**	**1265**	**177**	**180**	**3650**	**31.3%**	**24.3%**	**34.7%**	**4.8%**	**4.9%**

Full details via Local Living Mapping (arcgis.com)

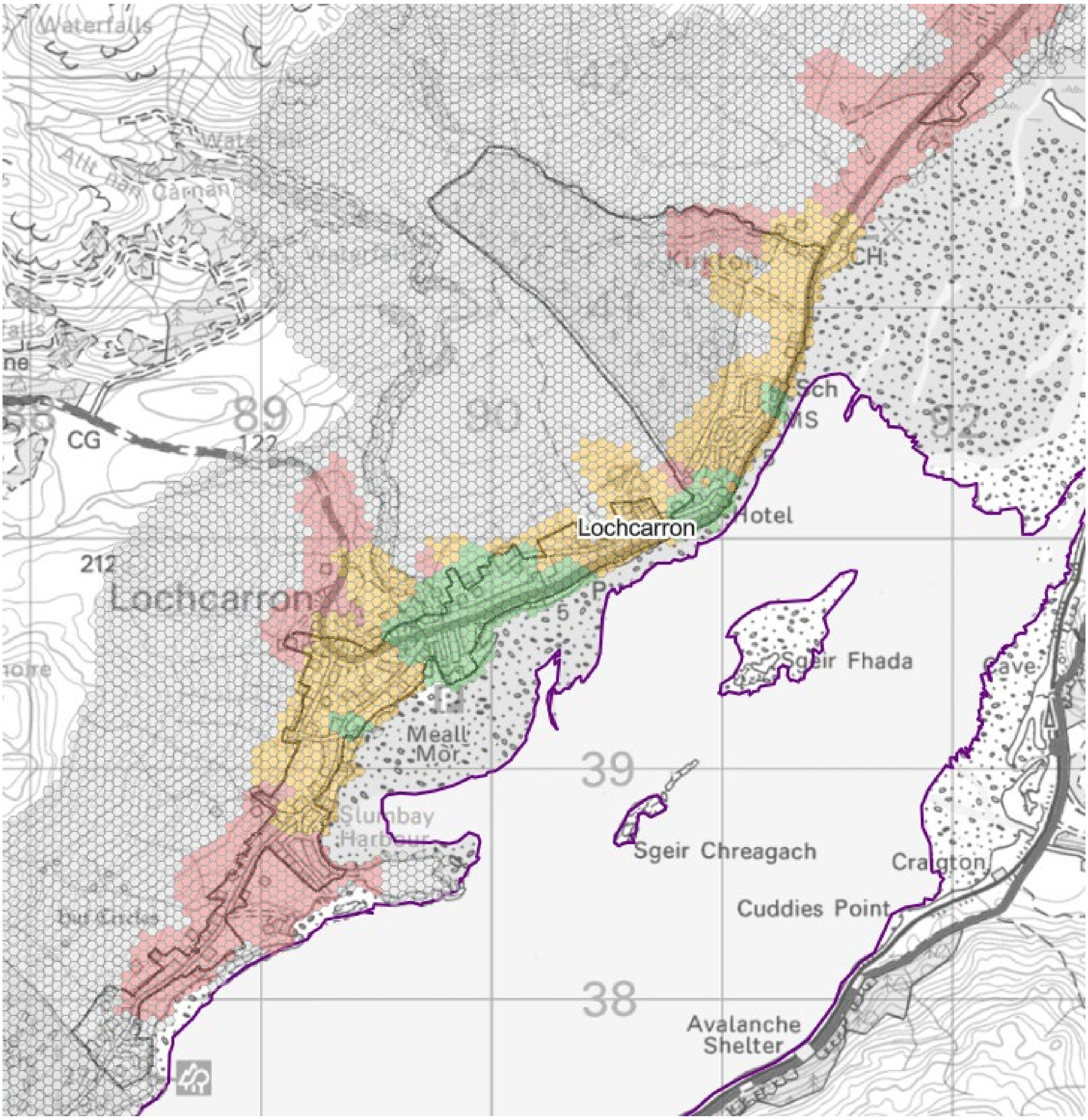
Appendix – Local Living Outcomes Maps for Main Settlements

Kyle of Lochalsh

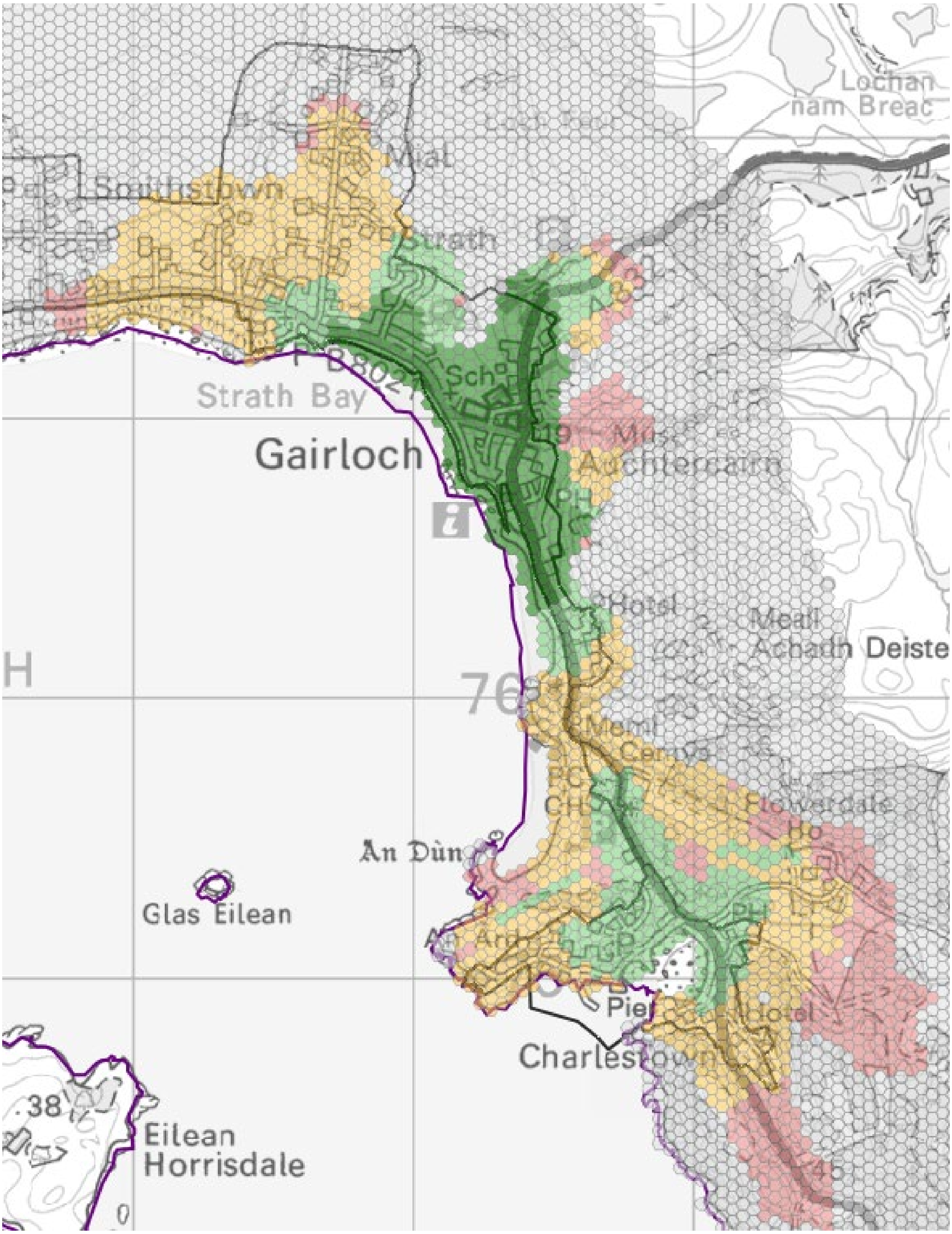




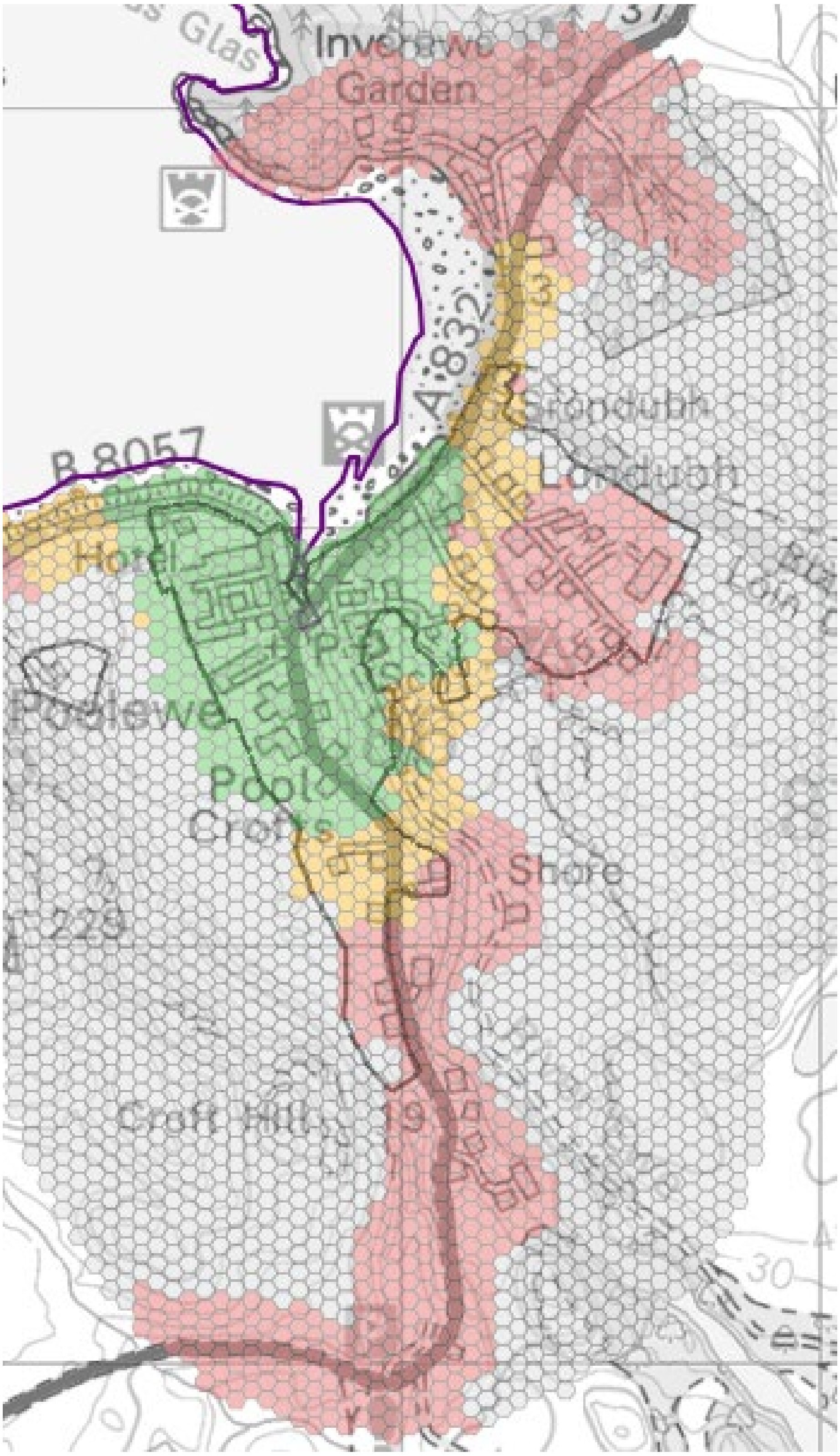
Lochcarron


Waterfalls
Allt nan Carnan
CG
89
122
212
Lochcarron
Kirkton
CH
Sch
MS
Hotel
Lochcarron
Sgeir Fhada
Cave
Meall
Mòr
39
Slumbay
Harbour
Sgeir Chreagach
Craigton
Cuddies Point
38
Avalanche
Shelter

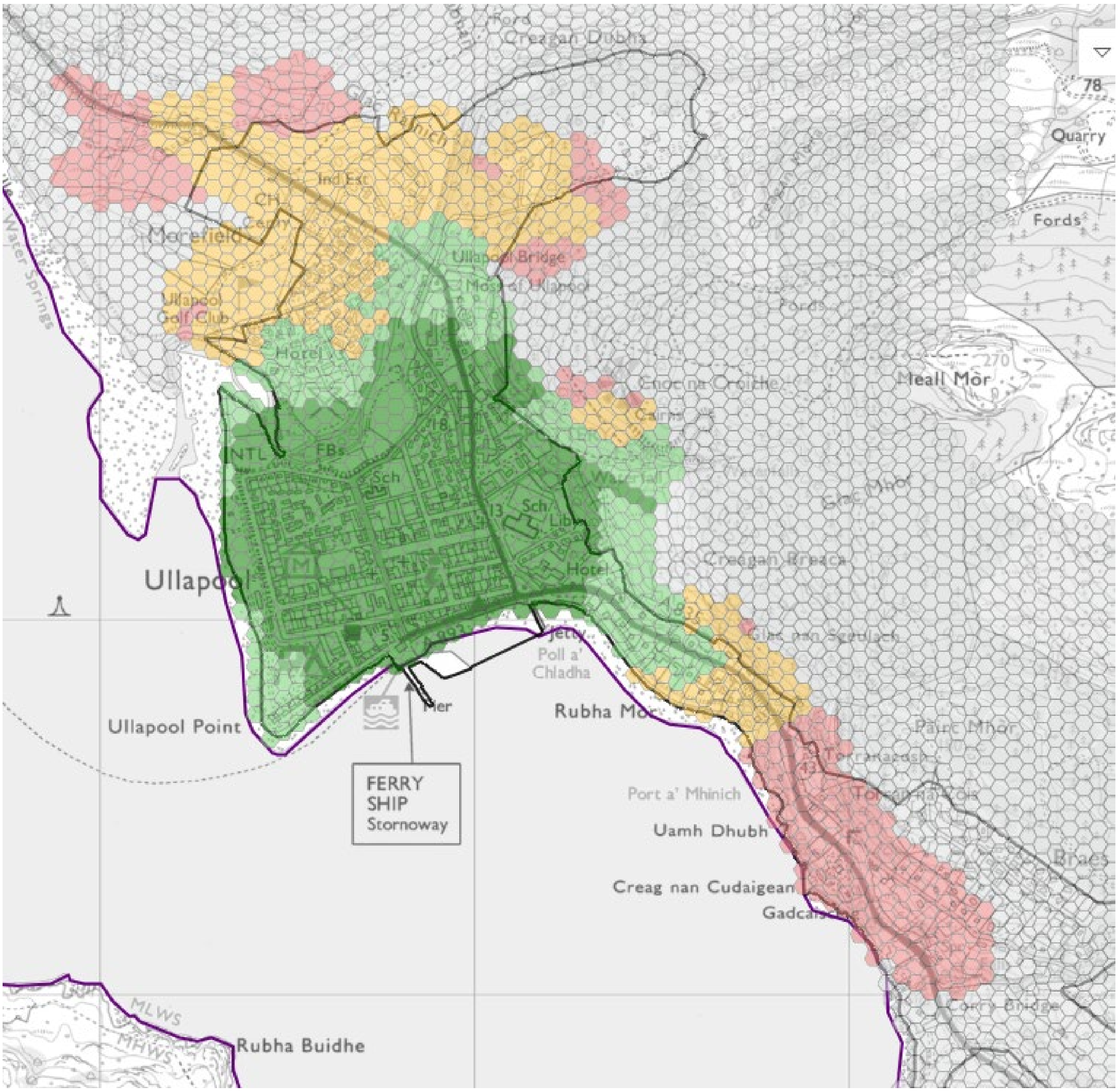
Gairloch


Lochan nam Breac
Strath Bay
Gairloch
Meall Achadh Deiste
An Dùn
Glas Eilean
Eilean Horrisdale
Charlestown
Flowerdale
Hotel
Pier
B8021
38

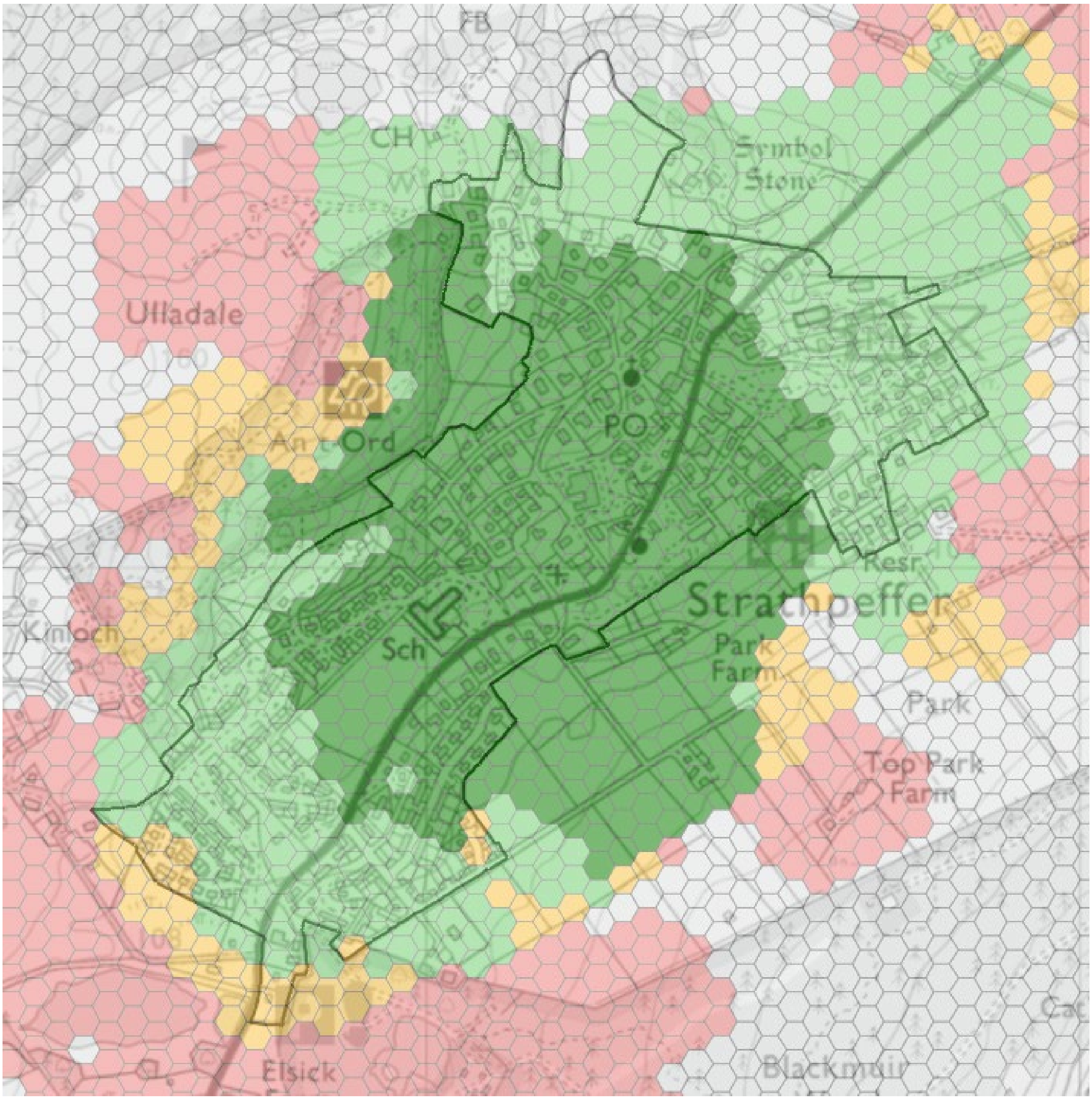
Poolewe


Garden
B 8057
A 832
Hotel
Poolewe
Pool
Crofts
Shore
Croft Hill
229
30

Ullapool


Creagan Dubha
78
Quarry
Fords
Morefield
Ind Est
Ullapool Golf Club
Ullapool Bridge
Hotel
Meall Mòr
FBs
Sch
Lib
Hotel
Creagan Breaca
Ullapool
Jetty
Poll a' Chladha
Pier
Rubha Mor
Ullapool Point
FERRY
SHIP
Stornoway
Port a' Mhinich
Uamh Dhubh
Creag nan Cudaigean
Braes
Rubha Buidhe
MLWS
MHWS

Strathpeffer



The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Appendix 2
Highland Local Development Plan: Draft Call for Sites Submission Template

The following tables list the proposed information that would be sought as part of site nominations submitted to the Council for a forthcoming Call for Sites process. When issued, these tables will be combined into an online form and useful published information sources added as hyperlinks.

1 SITE & PROPOSAL DETAILS

No.	Information Requested	Method of Data Entry / Notes
1	Site Name	Free text field.
2	Site Location	Free text field.
3	Settlement (or nearest settlement)	A drop-down list will be created.
4	Site Area (hectares)	The proponent will create a shapefile of the site in the consultation software.
5	OS Grid Reference (centre of site)	Supplied by proponent or automatically generated from centroid of shapefile.
6	Current land use(s)	A drop-down list will be created.
7	Proposed land use(s)	A drop-down list will be created.
8	Scale of proposed development (housing units and/or non-housing floorspace)	Free text field.
9	Planning history (previous planning application(s) permission(s) (if known / applicable)	Free text field.
10	Ownership(s), any tenancies, any burdens	Free text field.
11	Any supporting evidence (masterplan, site survey, investigation and/or viability assessment(s))	A PDF/JPEG file upload option will be available (with a confidentiality option).

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL CRITERIA

2 WATER ENVIRONMENT

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Could the proposal affect the condition of the water environment (water quality, physical condition, water resources, and the migration of wild fish)?	Check SEPA's Water Environment Hub webpage for further data on water body condition.
ii	Could the proposal have a direct impact on the water environment (for example, result in the need for watercourse crossings, a large-scale abstraction or allow the de-culverting of a watercourse?	Onsite check and/or OS base mapping. Specify minimum built development setback from any affected watercourse.
iii	Can the proposal connect to the public foul sewer?	Scottish Water Extranet check and Pre Development Enquiry (PDE) results.

iv	Can the proposal connect to the public water mains? If not, is there a sustainable water source that is resilient to the periods of water scarcity?	Scottish Water Extranet check and Pre Development Enquiry (PDE) results and Environmental Health.
v	Are there wetlands or boggy areas on the site?	Onsite check and/or OS base mapping.
vi	For large scale developments, are there any private or public water supplies within 250m of the site which may be affected?	Scottish Water Extranet check and Environmental Health.

3 CLIMATE CHANGE

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Relative to the future flood risk areas, as defined on SEPA's website mapping, could the proposal be at risk of flooding (from any source) or result in additional flood risk elsewhere? If so then specify which of the following flood sources are applicable: fluvial, pluvial, sewer, groundwater or coastal.	SEPA website Future Flood Risk mapping. If there is any overlap with a mapped risk area then a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be undertaken and supplied.
ii	Could the development of the site help alleviate any existing flooding problems in the area?	Any net betterment relative to existing flow rates / volumes assessed by Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA)?
iii	Is the proposal in a coastal location? Is it likely to be affected by or have a significant effect on coastal flooding, erosion or natural coastal processes?	Check Dynamic Coast and SEPA website Future (coastal) Flood Risk mapping.
iv	To what extent will the proposal promote and enable adaptation to climate change?	Detail any positive elements.
v	To what extent does the proposal use nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation?	Detail any positive elements.
vi	To what extent does the proposal maintain and enhance resilience of existing and planned grey and green infrastructure?	Detail any positive elements.
vii	Are the site's altitude, aspect and shelter from prevailing winds likely to minimise heating energy costs?	Interpret from OS and Met Office local climate data.
viii	Is the site in an area of heat network potential or a designated Heat Network Zone (HNZ)?	Check latest LHEES.

4 BIODIVERSITY

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	To what extent will the proposal conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity?	Apply THC's approved non-statutory Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance.
ii	To what extent will the proposal facilitate the creation of nature networks and improve ecological connectivity?	Apply THC's approved non-statutory Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance.
iii	To what extent will the proposal affect International Designations (e.g. Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Ramsar, World Heritage) sites including their connectivity?	Check NatureScot's SiteLink for geographic proximity. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Appropriate Assessment and Habitats Regulations Appraisal processes will formally assess likely effects.
iv	To what extent will the proposal affect national designations (e.g. SSSI, NNR)	Check SiteLink for geographic proximity.
v	To what extent will the proposal affect other designations -	THC and Scotland's Environment websites.

	and locally important designations such as Local Nature Reserves.	
vi	To what extent will the proposal affect Non designated – e.g. trees, TPOs, hedges, woodland, (including woodlands in the Ancient , Semi Natural and Long Established Plantation Woodlands), species rich grasslands	THC and Scotland's Environment websites.
vii	Protected Species–e.g. bats, otters, etc - can it be ascertained if protected species will be affected and will a site survey be required?	Local survey(s).
viii	To what extent will local geodiversity sites or wider geodiversity interests that could be affected by the proposal?	Sitelink and Scotland's Environment websites.
ix	How will habitat connectivity or wildlife corridors be affected by the proposal – will it result in habitat fragmentation or greater connectivity?	Local survey(s) and existing LDP green network mapping.

5 AIR QUALITY / HEALTH & SAFETY

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Could the proposal lead to Local Air Quality Management thresholds being breached in an existing Air Quality Management Area?	Scotland's Environment and Highland Council websites.
ii	Could the proposal lead to the designation of a new Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)?	Y/N
iii	Does the proposal introduce a new potentially significant air emission to the area (e.g. combined heat and power, an industrial process, large scale quarry etc.)?	Y/N
iv	Will the proposal lead to a sensitive use being located close to a site with noise/odour issues or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA (e.g. new housing adjacent to a large manufacturing factory)	Y/N (apply NPF4 Agent of Change principle)
v	Is the proposal within the consultation zone of a major accident hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline?	THC and Health and Safety Executive data.

6 WASTE & NATURAL RESOURCES

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will the proposal affect the quantity, quality or connectivity of open space or the wider green network?	Local survey(s) and LDP greenspace audit and mapping.
ii	Will the proposal be on vacant or derelict land, or on other previously used land (brownfield land, potentially contaminated land)?	Local survey(s) and aerial photography.
iii	Is the proposal on peat or carbon rich soils and could the development of the site lead to a loss of peat or carbon rich soils?	Scotland's Environment website.

iv	Will the proposal affect prime farmland, good quality agricultural soils or locally important croft land?	Scotland's Environment and Crofting Register websites.
v	Is the proposal adjacent to a waste management site and could compromise its operation?	Local survey(s) and aerial photography.
vi	Does the proposal minimise demand for primary resources by reusing an existing building?	Local survey(s) and aerial photography.
vii	For waste infrastructure and facilities (except landfill and Energy from Waste) does the proposal comply with the criteria listed in NPF4 Policy 12 d)?	EIA, local survey(s) and aerial photography.

7 LANDSCAPE

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	To what extent will any nationally designated sites be affected (NSAs and Wild Land areas)	Scotland's Environment website.
ii	To what extent will any regionally/locally designated sites be affected (Special Landscape Areas [SLAs])?	THC website.
iii	Will the proposal exceed local landscape (including townscape and visual) capacity?	Proposal-specific assessment.
iv	Will the proposal have significant effects on landscape character?	Proposal-specific assessment.
v	Will the proposal have significant effects on the character of the existing settlement including its setting?	Proposal-specific assessment.

8 CULTURAL HERITAGE

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will the proposal have significant effects on scheduled monuments or their setting?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
ii	Will the proposal have significant effects on locally important archaeological sites?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
iii	Will the proposal have significant effects on listed buildings or their setting?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
iv	Will the proposal have significant effects on a Conservation Area?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
v	Will the proposal have significant effects on Garden and Designed Landscapes?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
vi	Will the proposal have significant effects on an Inventory Historic Battlefield?	Council's Highland Historic Environment Record (HER).
vii	Will the proposal have significant effects on a World Heritage Site?	Apply Heritage Impact Assessment Toolkit
viii	Can the proposal enhance or improve public access to the historic environment?	Proposal-specific assessment.
ix	Does the proposal promote or enable the retention, maintenance, resilience, green energy transition, efficiency and sustainable use or re-use of historic buildings and infrastructure?	Proposal-specific assessment.

9 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will the proposal require significant new transport infrastructure?	Proposal-specific assessment of the spare existing infrastructure capacity to service the development.
ii	Will the proposal increase the overall car km travelled thereby increasing carbon emissions and therefore exacerbating climate change?	Proposal-specific assessment which should include the likely modal split of future journeys.
iii	Will the development of the site impact on core paths and other active travel networks that could reduce the attractiveness of carbon neutral travel options (inc. pedestrian priority/desire lines)?	Apply Core Paths, Active Travel Audits and LDP networks from Council's website.
iv	How well will the proposal fit with the NPF4 "Local Living" and "20 Minute Neighbourhoods" principles?	Apply Council's Local Living Tool.

10 INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY (In line with NPF4 Infrastructure First Principle)

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Is there sufficient existing and programmed nursery, primary and secondary school capacity to service the proposed development?	Council's School Roll Forecasts and Delivery Programme.
ii	Is there sufficient existing and programmed mains water and sewerage capacity to service the proposed development?	Scottish Water feedback from proponent's Pre Development Enquiry.
iii	Is there sufficient existing and programmed health facility capacity to service the proposed development?	NHS Highland and Public Health Scotland websites.
iv	Will the proposal have the opportunity to incorporate new or enhance existing blue and/or green infrastructure providing multiple benefits such as enhanced biodiversity, management of surface water?	Proposal-specific assessment.

11 PLACEMAKING

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will the development deliver on all of the six qualities of successful places?	Proposal-specific assessment against NPF4 Policy 14.
ii	Will the proposal impact on the placemaking priorities for the settlement/area?	Proposal-specific assessment against the existing area LDP Placemaking Priorities.
iii	To what extent will the proposal affect the quality and quantity of open space and connectivity and accessibility to open space or result in a loss of open space?	Proposal-specific assessment against NPF4 Policy 20. Apply Council's Play Sufficiency Assessment when available and if relevant to proposal.

12 DELIVERABILITY

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Will developer contributions (financial sums) rather than direct developer funded improvements be needed?	Proposal-specific assessment. Apply Council's published Developer Contributions Guidance and Delivery Programme.
ii	Are there abnormal costs that could impact the site's delivery (e.g. physical constraints, contamination, topography etc.)?	Proposal-specific assessment.
iii	Are there any significant landownership issues which need to be overcome?	Proposal-specific assessment.
iv	Will the site be delivered within the LDP timeframe (10 years from adoption)?	Proposal-specific assessment.

13 COMPATABILITY WITH EXISTING POLICY

No.	Question / Information Requested	Proponent / Council Checks
i	Is the site and proposal compatible with NPF4?	Interpret and apply all relevant NPF4 policies.
ii	Is the site and proposal compatible with any applicable Local Place Plan?	Interpret and apply all relevant Local Place Plan policies.
iii	Is the site and proposal compatible with any applicable Area Place Plan?	Interpret and apply all relevant Area Place Plan policies.
iv	Is the site and proposal compatible with THC's "community resilience network" evidence	Apply published Council guidance.
v	Is the site and proposal compatible with the existing area local development plan?	Interpret and apply all relevant area local development plan policies.