

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Linne Mhoireibh A-Staigh 2

Main Issues Report

January 2021

highland.gov.uk/imf

The Main Issues Report is an important stage in the preparation of the new Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan. It sets out the priorities for things such as employment, housing, town centres and the environment. It is essential that everyone gets involved at this stage; this is your chance to help shape the future of the places where you live and work.

A current and responsive development plan is vital at a time of uncertainty. This Report outlines a path to post pandemic economic recovery and ways in which to tackle longer term issues such as the Climate and Ecological Emergency. It also embodies sufficient flexibility to react quickly to fluid issues such as post Brexit trading conditions and changes in public funding levels.

We value your participation. You will see that options are open and we need your input to shape the content of the final Plan.

This Report and the later Plan are also about delivering an agreed future. Throughout this document you will see references to economic viability. We are suggesting that the type and pattern of future growth must be deliverable for all funding partners. The Plan will have a crucial role to play in coordinating public and private funding decisions for each place via its Delivery Programme. We will work closely with infrastructure providers to make the most of existing assets, and plan new services and infrastructure where necessary to support growth.

We look forward to hearing your comments about making the Inner Moray Firth an even better place.



Fiona Robertson - Chair: Easter
Ross Area Committee



Tom Heggie - Chair: Nairnshire
Committee



Helen Carmichael - Provost: City
of Inverness Area Committee



Gordon Adam - Chair: Black Isle, Dingwall
and Seaforth Committee



Ian Cockburn - Chair: Wester Ross,
Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee

Foreword | Facal-tòiseachaidh

'S e ceum cudromach a th' ann an Aithisg nam Prìomh Chùisean ann a bhith ag ullachadh Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh.

Tha i a' mìneachadh nam prìomhachasan airson rudan a leithid cosnadh, taigheadas, meadhanan bhailtean agus an àrainneachd. Tha e riatanach gun gabh a h-uile duine com-pàirt aig an ìre seo; seo an cothrom agaibhse cuideachadh gus cumadh a thoirt air àm ri teachd nan àiteachan anns a bheil sibh fhèin a' fuireach is ag obair.

Tha plana leasachaidh làithreach is co-fhreagrach fìor chudromach aig àm mì-chinnt. Tha an Aithisg seo a' mìneachadh ceum air adhart gu ruige ath-shlànachadh eaconamach às dèidh a' ghalair mhòr-sgaoilte agus dòighean anns am bu chòir dhuinn a dhol an sàs ann an cùisean fad-ùine a leithid Èiginn na Gnàth-shìde agus an Eag-eòlais. Tha i cuideachd a' gabhail a-steach subailteachd gu leòr gus freagairt gu luath air cùisean a dh'fhaodadh atharrachadh a leithid chumhaichean malairt às dèidh Brexit agus atharrachaidhean ann an ìrean maoin phoblaich.

Tha sinn a' cur luach air a' chom-pàirteachas agaibh. Chì sibh gu bheil roghainnean fosgailte agus gu bheil feum againn air na beachdan agaibh gus cumadh a thoirt air susbaint a' Phlana dheireannaich.

Tha an Aithisg seo agus am Plana a thig às a dèidh mu bhith a' libhrigeadh àm ri teachd aontaichte. Tron sgrìobhainn seo chì sibh iomraidhean air ion-obrachas eaconamach. Tha sinn a' moladh gum feum seòrsa is pàtran fàs san àm ri teachd a bhith air a stiùireadh gus am bi e comasach do na com-pàirtichean maoin eachaidh againn air fad a libhrigeadh. Bidh dreuchd riatanach aig a' Phlana ann a bhith a' co-òrdanachadh cho-dhùnaidhean a thaobh maoin eachaidh poblach is prìobhaideach airson gach àite tron Phrògram Lìbhrigidh aige. Bidh sinn ag obair gu dlùth le solaraidhean bun-structair gus am feum as fheàrr a dhèanamh dhen t-so-mhaoin a th' againn mar-thà, agus a' planadh sheirbheisean ùra is bun-structair ùr far a bheil sin a dhìth gus taic a chur ri fàs.

Tha sinn a' coimhead air adhart ri bhith a' cluinntinn nam beachdan agaibh mu bhith a' dèanamh Linne Mhoireibh A-staigh nas fheàrr buileach.

How to comment

This document asks for your views on the Main Issues that will affect the future development of the Inner Moray Firth area. We will use these views later to help us prepare the new Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan. This Main Issues Report includes a suggested Vision (described as Outcomes) and Spatial Strategy for the Plan area and lists the Council's initial preferences on development site options and priorities for settlements.

Throughout the document you will find consultation points which set out questions on the Main Issues for you to consider. We have drawn up options for tackling each Main Issue, and have highlighted which option the Council prefers. We ask you to read and think about these options and tell us your views, including which option(s) you support and why. When assessing the options for development sites, you may wish to suggest that an alternative site is more suitable than the preferred site(s) we have identified. You may wish to suggest an alternative boundary for a site or settlement, or a more appropriate use for a site.

The easiest way to read and comment on this Main Issues Report is through our Consultation portal. Copies of the Main Issues Report in .pdf format are also available here, however to comment, you must access the [portal](#)⁽¹⁾. If you do not have access to a computer then please contact the Development Plans Team and we will provide a form for you to submit your comments.

All comments must be made by Thursday 1st April 2021.

How to find out more

Our [website](#)⁽²⁾ will provide details of our public engagement during the consultation period. If you would like to speak to a member of the Development Plans Team please contact us by email at imfldp@highland.gov.uk or by calling 01349 886608. Please note that due to the current pandemic we will normally call you back rather than have an officer immediately available to answer your query.

1 <https://consult.highland.gov.uk/kse/>

2 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan

What is the status of this document?

This is a consultation document and does not represent the approved planning policy of the Highland Council. Its contents, as yet, are not used in the determination of planning applications. Instead, it sets out the Council's initial ideas and preferences for the future planning of the Inner Moray Firth area in a way that is intended to prompt debate and comment.

The formally approved, statutory development plan for this area comprises the existing [Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan adopted in July 2015^{\(3\)}](#) (aIMFLDP), the [Highland-wide Local Development Plan adopted in April 2012^{\(4\)}](#) (HwLDP) and [detailed planning guidance^{\(5\)}](#) connected to these two plans. For a very limited number of sites and developments the aIMFLDP and HwLDP say different things about the Council's attitude to development. In the event of any incompatibility between a provision of these two plans then the more up to date plan (i.e. the aIMFLDP) will prevail as the Council's policy for that site/issue.

How to use this document

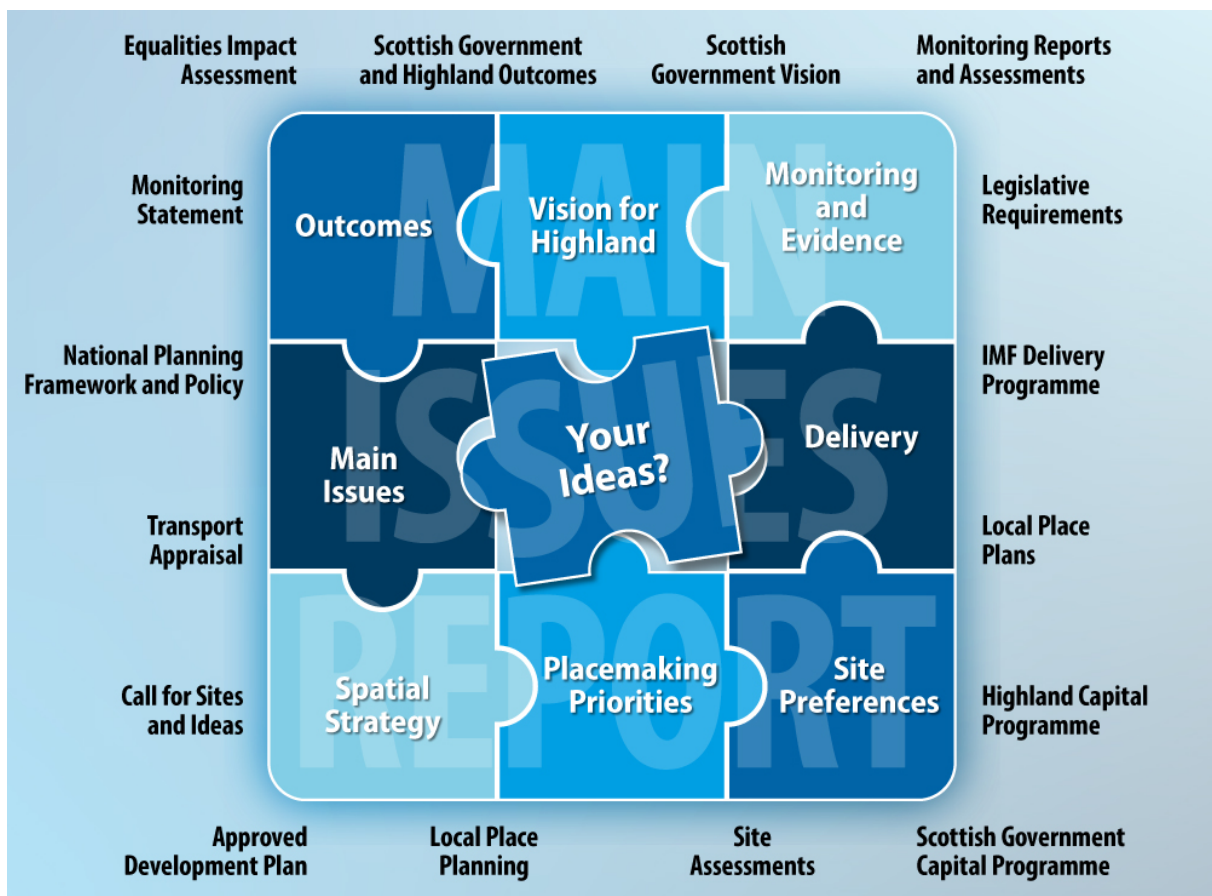
This document is made up of maps and text. If you are interested in finding out what it means for your particular area or proposal then you need to read both. Also, to get a complete picture this Report should be read in conjunction with other relevant documents. The most important of these are illustrated in Figure 2.1 'Other documents affecting the Main Issues Report'. Please note that the outer document titles are aligned next to the section of the Main Issues Report to which they most closely relate but many also influence other parts of the Report.

3 https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15008/adopted_inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan

4 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/199/highland-wide_local_development_plan

5 https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/52/development_guidance

Figure 2.1 Other documents affecting the Main Issues Report



In the future, plans prepared by individual communities will play an increasingly important role, influencing the Council's Plan, which in turn will shape the local context. More formal arrangements for the preparation of these so-called "Local Place Plans" will be confirmed by the Scottish Government in the next 1 - 2 years.

At a more strategic level, there are wide range of plans, policies, strategies and other documents that underpin or otherwise influence this Report and can affect a planning decision. Of particular note is the Monitoring Statement which is cross referred throughout this Report and provides the evidence and rationale for the Main Issues and the options set out.

What are the steps in making the Plan?

This is the first of several versions of the Plan. Each successive version becomes more detailed and more definitive as the Council's view on development within the Inner Moray Firth area. We have already asked people for ideas through a "[Call for Sites](#)"⁽⁶⁾" and these views have been useful in

6 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3

About this Main Issues Report | Mun Aithisg Phrìomh Chùisean seo

preparing this document. Many of the Call for Sites development site suggestions are included in this Report with an initial indication of what we think of them. However, some suggestions have not been included because we think they are of too small a scale to be significant to the future of a main settlement or they are proposals or in locations that are clearly, in our view, environmentally unsustainable. This Main Issues Report's primary purpose is to prompt public debate and written comment on how the Council and others should shape future development of the area.

We will collate and analyse all comments, seek further input and then publish a Proposed Plan version of the document in around a year's time. This will then be the Council's "settled position" on many details of how and where development should happen including for example what developers will be required to do to receive planning permission on any given site. This too will be consulted upon but with an emphasis on testing the Council's position. Those disagreeing with the Council's view have a right of objection which, if unresolved, is referred to a Scottish Government appointed person called a Reporter for their decision. Thereafter the Council publishes a final version of the Plan incorporating changes recommended by the Reporter.

Main Issues Report

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues Lèirsinn, Builean agus Prìomh Chùisean	9
1.1 Vision and Outcomes	9
1.2 Main Issues	12
1.2.1 Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency	12
1.2.2 Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy	16
1.2.3 Growing the most sustainable places	23
1.2.4 Delivering affordable housing	33
1.2.5 Matching development with infrastructure capacity	37
1.2.6 Creating a more healthy, sustainable transport network	39
1.2.7 Identifying and safeguarding valued, local green space	47
1.2.8 Placemaking	52
1.2.9 Meeting the needs of an ageing population	56
2 Spatial Strategy Ro-innleachd Spàsail	59
3 Main Settlements Prìomh Thuineachaidhean	63
3.1 Alness Alanais	65
3.2 Ardersier Àird nan Saor	71
3.3 Auldearn Allt Èireann	75
3.4 Avoch Abhach	79
3.5 Beaully A' Mhanachainn	83
3.6 Cawdor Caladair	88
3.7 Conon Bridge Drochaid Sguideil	91
3.8 Contin Cunndainn	95
3.9 Cromarty Cromba	98
3.10 Croy Crothaidh	101
3.11 Culbokie Cùil Bhàicidh	105
3.12 Dingwall Inbhir Pheofharain	108
3.13 Dores Duras	115
3.14 Drumnadrochit Druim na Drochaid	119

Contents

3.15 Evanton Baile Eòghainn	123
3.16 Fort Augustus Cille Chuimein	127
3.17 Fortrose and Rosemarkie A' Chananaich agus Ros Maircnidh	131
3.18 Inchmore An Innis Mhòr	134
3.19 Invergordon Inbhir Ghòrdain	137
3.20 Inverness Inbhir Nis	143
3.20.1 West Inverness	147
3.20.2 South Inverness	154
3.20.3 Central Inverness	163
3.20.4 East Inverness	169
3.21 Kiltarlity Cill Taraglain	177
3.22 Kirkhill Cnoc Mhoire	181
3.23 Maryburgh Baile Màiri	185
3.24 Muir of Ord Am Blàr Dubh	188
3.25 Munlochy Poll Lochaidh	193
3.26 Nairn Inbhir Narann	197
3.27 North Kessock Ceasag a Tuath	204
3.28 Seaboard Villages Bailtean Cladaich	208
3.29 Strathpeffer Srath Pheofhair	212
3.30 Tain Baile Dhubhthaich	215
3.31 Tomatin An Tom Aiteann	220
3.32 Tore An Todhar	224
3.33 Tornagrain Cnoc na Grèine	227
4 Growing Settlements Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs	230
5 Economic Development Areas Raointean Fàis Eaconamaich	260
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Glossary Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair	273
Appendix 2: Placemaking Audit Eàrr-ràdh 2: Sgrùdadh Dèanamh Àiteachan	285

1.1 Vision and Outcomes

The proposed Vision for the Inner Moray Firth area is set out in Table 1 'Topics and Outcomes' as four inter-related headline outcomes. This provides an ambitious and appropriate framework for the future which takes account of national priorities and investment. It also takes account of [the Council's vision and strategy for Highland^{\(7\)}](#) recently submitted to Scottish Government for consideration as part of the new National Planning Framework 4. This has been tailored to the Inner Moray Firth area and has shaped this Report's Outcomes, Spatial Strategy and Placemaking Priorities which the Plan and other place plans will be expected to deliver.

Table 1 Topics and Outcomes

Growing Communities	Our communities will be sustainable, well-designed places with homes which meet people's needs. More people will want to live in Inverness and the larger towns and villages as they are attractive, safe, socially inclusive and healthy, with thriving centres and better access to services and facilities. Inner Moray Firth communities will function as networks of locally resilient and self-supporting places with equality of access to local resources.
Employment	The Inner Moray Firth economy will be growing, greener, circular and diverse. Local enterprises will be national leaders in the life sciences, sustainable tourism and renewable energy sectors. More traditional sectors such as construction, food and drink and smaller scale general industry will have continued to thrive and provide jobs close to where people live reducing the need to travel.
Connectivity	It will be easy to move around and between settlements in the Inner Moray Firth area. Walking and cycling will be the logical choice for most day to day trips, with longer journeys made using an efficient, reliable public transport system and, in rural areas, shared transport and electric vehicles. Sustainable regional, national and global connections will be available from modern bus and rail stations, harbours and Inverness Airport. Improved digital connectivity throughout the Plan area will enable home working for most people, helping to reduce the need to travel.
Environment	The Inner Moray Firth's built, cultural and natural assets will be safeguarded and appropriately managed. Water, waste, heat, land and buildings will be used, re-used, located and designed in a carbon clever way. The environmental quality of all places will be safeguarded and where possible enhanced.

7 <https://www.highland.gov.uk/npf>

We have analysed past and likely future trends within each of these topic areas as set out in our Monitoring Statement and this evidence has influenced both the Outcomes and in particular the nine Main Issues, which we have identified together with our suggested approach to each of them. A summary of our evidence-led approach is explained in the following paragraphs and is set out in more detail in the accompanying Monitoring Statement.

Growing communities

Past and current trends suggest that the Inner Moray Firth is likely to have a future population that is stable but ageing. Our communities will continue to grow but often in locations that are environmentally unsustainable and where public infrastructure networks will struggle to cope. In terms of housing provision, waiting lists are not being cleared by the number of houses presently being built and there is shortfall in accommodation fully adapted to the needs of the ageing population. More positively, the Inner Moray Firth area has a level of development interest, land availability and development costs that makes growth more viable than in other parts of Highland.

Employment

Similarly, the Inner Moray Firth's likely future economy will be buoyant and diverse relative to other parts of Highland and Scotland because of its natural assets, good connectivity and centrality to the north of Scotland. However, some employment sectors have weaknesses such as tourism which is seasonal and some like energy and construction which are cyclical. As digital connectivity improves and face to face business becomes less vital then the Inner Moray Firth will offer a much better working and living environment than its more urban counterparts. Challenges remain most notably in tourism where without new investment in tourism infrastructure this trend may damage the visitor's experience of the Inner Moray Firth. Similarly, the current supply of employment land and buildings is not matched to current and likely future user requirements. There is an over supply of outdated office and larger industrial unit accommodation whereas there is an under supply of smaller general industrial units and of new, high quality commercial/community hubs in fully accessible locations. The private property market is unlikely to resolve these issues without public policy and financial intervention.

Connectivity

Analysis of recent travel patterns shows that more people are driving, congestion and climate change effects are increasing, fewer people are using buses and the location and design of newer urban developments is making these problems worse. The Inner Moray Firth is the most urban part of Highland and therefore gives us the best chance to move away from car-based living to more sustainable, healthier ways of getting around. Attitudes are changing, more people wish to

switch to more sustainable forms of travel and the technological innovations to allow such a switch are happening. Without a new approach to change travel opportunities and behaviours, many journeys will still be expensive, unreliable and of limited modal choice.

Environment

The Inner Moray Firth has fewer environmental constraints compared to the rest of Highland and many of these constraints are marine or confined to the mountainous periphery of the Plan area and therefore remote from local settlement and thus less at risk of direct impact from development. However, increased adverse climate change effects are being seen locally as evidenced by an increased frequency and magnitude of flood events. The private sector and individual households are unlikely to mitigate for and adapt to climate change without some form of public policy intervention. More positively, continuing natural processes such as the regeneration of woodland offer an opportunity, with simple safeguarding and minor physical measures, to enhance biodiversity and address climate change effects.

Our Main Issues

In addition, there are two pre-eminent Main Issues that have shaped this Report and influenced its Vision and Outcomes. These are the Climate and Ecological Emergency, as declared by Highland Council and Scottish Government, and economic recovery from the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to their fundamental and cross cutting impact, these two issues have been considered throughout this document. This Report poses options for addressing these issues and the feedback received will inform the next stage of the Plan, by which time it is hoped that a clearer picture will have emerged.

We have taken these Outcomes and the wider Vision and assessed what needs to be done to achieve them.

1.2 Main Issues

We believe that there are nine Main Issues that need to be discussed and then a collective way forward decided upon and delivered.

1. Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency.
2. Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy.
3. Growing the most sustainable places.
4. Delivering affordable housing.
5. Matching development with infrastructure capacity.
6. Creating a more healthy, sustainable transport network.
7. Identifying and safeguarding valued, local green space.
8. Placemaking.
9. Meeting the needs of an ageing population.

1.2.1 Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency

Tackling the climate and ecological emergency is at the heart of this plan review and embedded within each section of this Main Issues Report. Supporting a transition to green circular economy underpins the aims of this plan to tackle both the climate and ecological emergency and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The draft Environmental Report, which has been prepared alongside the Main Issues Report, assesses the possible effects which the Plan may have on the environment and has helped integrate these considerations in shaping the proposed Spatial Strategy, initial policy approaches and development site preferences. This approach is also directly aligned with the Council's [Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy](#)⁽⁸⁾, which is a response to the current National Planning Framework consultation.

In May 2019 the Highland Council declared a [climate and ecological emergency](#)⁽⁹⁾ and committed to work towards a Carbon Neutral Highlands by 2025. This is an ambitious commitment and this Plan will contribute to its delivery, which would mean Highland becoming the Council region with the lowest carbon footprint in Scotland⁽¹⁰⁾. The ecological element of the Council's declared Emergency is less well developed and it is noted that the Scottish Government has highlighted securing positive effects for biodiversity as one of the key requirements of the new planning system.

8 <https://consult.highland.gov.uk/portal/dp/npf4/npf4?pointId=5619115#document-5619115>

9 https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4119/highland_council/attachment/75435

10 This target is to have the lowest net carbon output per capita of any Scottish local authority.

Efficient use of heat

The ways in which we generate and consume energy needs to play a major role in how we respond to the Climate and Ecological Emergency. The Council wants to help deliver national targets to transform the places we live through greater energy efficiency, more local energy systems and less reliance on carbon-based fuels. Future developments provide opportunities to deliver on these ambitions and help achieve low or zero carbon status. The Development Plan for Highland already sets out requirements for developments in terms of their sustainability and energy efficient design and we want to build on this by setting out what communities, developers and other stakeholders should do.

Decarbonising the gas network, which many parts of the Inner Moray Firth area is reliant on, will be critical to meet Net Zero targets, with heating being one of the most challenging issues to face. This is the main conclusion of the [Pathways to Net Zero](#)⁽¹¹⁾ report which outlines a strategy for decarbonised gas in 2050. We need to ensure that development is located in the right places and designed to the right standards to ensure we can best accommodate this change. A key element is increasing district heating networks, which can also help address concerns about energy security and supply, and fuel poverty. The Council has begun work on this, including an initial assessment of places with greatest potential for heat networks. The most viable places typically have high heat users or producers, few physical obstacles to cross and future development sites. Within these places we will expect that development delivers or enables connection to a heat network. Where networks are not viable, we will expect that micro-generation and heat recovery technologies associated with individual properties be delivered.

A range of other measures have been considered to ensure the plan maximises its potential to mitigate and adapt to the climate and ecological emergency. The approaches proposed by the other main issues discussed in this document fit into the three key themes described in our preferred approach shown in Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency

Preferred approach

Efficient Use of Heat

We believe that the introduction of a new policy to support the delivery of more sustainable forms of heat is needed. The policy would require all planning applications to consider the feasibility of meeting the development's heat demand through a district heating network or

11 <http://www.energynetworks.org/assets/files/gas/Navigant%20Pathways%20to%20Net-Zero.pdf>

other low-carbon alternatives. This could be based on a hierarchy, whereby new development located next to significant heat sources will need to be designed so that it can connect to an existing heat network or a wider planned network at a future date. Any land required to deliver the heat network will be protected and incorporated into the design and layout of the proposed development. Where a heat network is not viable, the use of micro-generation and other heat recovery technologies will be encouraged.

Over the coming months we will be taking a closer look at the places which are most viable and will provide greater detail and guidance at Proposed Plan stage on the opportunities and what will be required from stakeholders to deliver them. In the meantime, we have prepared a more general guidance note which sets out the direction and expected approach to energy provision, systems and energy efficiency of developments.

Getting the right development in the right place

Each theme below provides an explanation of how the Plan proposes to tackle the Climate and Ecological Emergency, and provides sign posts to the relevant Main Issues elsewhere in this document.

1. By considering the functions that different villages, towns and the city serve, we have developed a spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy. This enables us to target development to the most sustainable locations, ensuring it has the lowest impact on the climate as possible, and can help us adapt to where climate change may present future challenges. You can read more about this in 1.2.3 'Growing the most sustainable places'.
2. In working out where the best places are to direct new growth, we've looked at the infrastructure that is needed to support new communities and have targeted growth primarily to where there is existing capacity, and set out how we expect developers to tackle capacity issues to enable new communities to live in well-served climate smart (sustainable) places. You can read more about this in 1.2.5 'Matching development with infrastructure capacity'.
3. We've looked at how the places we create influence the quality of environment that people live, work and play in. Aspects such as design and placemaking can have a significant impact on how successful a place is, such as providing everyday needs sustainably. We've also considered the needs of our changing, ageing population which will impact on the climate as a greater number of older people rely on more social and health care services. You can read more about these topics in 1.2.8 'Placemaking' and 1.2.9 'Meeting the needs of an ageing population'.
4. We've also taken a detailed look at all of the sites proposed through the Call for Sites process and those in the aIMFLDP to ensure we support the sites that have the least impacts in terms of climate change, and that we don't support sites where predicted

climate change would present a future risk that could be avoided, such as flooding. You can read the assessments for all the sites in the [Main Issues Report](#)⁽¹²⁾.

Ensuring our transport network is fit for purpose

Ensuring new development is easily accessible by healthy, sustainable travel options was one of the underpinning elements of the previous theme, but we also took a detailed look at how transport decisions made through the planning system can impact our lives and determine the travel choices we can make. Being one of the biggest contributors to the climate and ecological emergency, both through direct emissions, and by making it harder or easier to choose sustainable travel options, the future of transport is being carefully considered through the Plan. You can read more about this in 1.2.6 'Creating a more healthy, sustainable transport network'. You can also read more detail in the [Transport Appraisal](#)⁽¹³⁾ supporting this Main Issues Report.

Managing biodiversity and ecology

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requires that securing positive effects for biodiversity will be one of the six key outcomes of the emerging National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). This is recognised in the Council's indicative Regional Spatial Strategy submitted to Scottish Government for consideration as part of NPF4. The biodiversity and ecology of the Inner Moray Firth area is one of its greatest assets. There is urgent need to address this requirement by developing a mechanism that not only secures no net loss to biodiversity, but can deliver biodiversity improvements over the short, medium and long term.

Maximising the potential of our green and blue infrastructure

How we develop our settlements influences how much green and blue (water) space we use or safeguard, with such spaces often important for storing carbon and therefore mitigating climate change. They are also places where we can reduce our carbon footprint by creating attractive local destinations for leisure and recreation, and can increase resilience of communities and reduce carbon footprints through local food production and other activities. We've considered how the current policies safeguard green and blue infrastructure and what

12 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3

13 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3

we think is a good way to bring this approach up to date. You can read more about this in 1.2.7 'Identifying and safeguarding valued, local green space'. You can also see how we've considered green and blue infrastructure through the [site assessments](#)⁽¹⁴⁾.

Biodiversity Enhancement

It is recognised that all development can have implications for biodiversity and there are particular challenges to meet the emerging requirements to secure positive effects for biodiversity. There are already mechanisms in place that help to mitigate the on-site implications of development for biodiversity but gaining net enhancement to biodiversity assets is more difficult. Currently much development in Highland delivers an overall net loss to biodiversity by, for example, removing and fragmenting habitat and sealing soil surfaces. Delivering improvements to biodiversity on site is extremely challenging especially in small and medium scale development sites. In order to achieve this emerging requirement for positive effects for biodiversity, we are considering the principle of applying a developer contribution towards addressing biodiversity improvements. This could potentially involve quantifying the total area of sealed soil surface on greenfield development sites and applying a fixed sum contribution per hectare of sealed land.

Alternative approach

Some alternative approaches to addressing our Climate and Ecological Emergency have been considered and are described in the other Main Issues referred to previously. The approach to a lot of the topics, such as flood risk, are required to be considered by law and therefore there is no reasonable alternative approach.

1.2.2 Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy

The regional economy is facing challenges from several directions: the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, the potential major changes resulting from Brexit, and the need to respond to the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Whilst the longer-term effects of these are very difficult to predict, the timely review of this Plan offers an ideal opportunity to set out a collective medium to long term vision.

14 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3

Respond, recover, progress and transition

This Plan proposes a number of measures for growing the longer term economy of the Inner Moray Firth area. It incorporates measures which help respond and recover from the immediate pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic and pave the way for the area to progress and ultimately transition to a green circular economy - low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

The Council has set up a Recovery Board to agree prompt actions for addressing the impacts of the pandemic. This is starting with the identification of short-term measures and projects to address the most pressing issues.

Outlined here are some of the main ways in which we will support the economy to grow. We've sign posted the relevant Main Issue where more information can be found:

- The role of town centres will continue to form a fundamental part of the sustainability of our communities and this is only reinforced by the COVID-19 crisis. As set out in Town Centre First Policy we must provide flexibility to allow town centres to adapt to various pressures but also protect and enhance their role to ensure they are at the forefront of social, economic and cultural activity.
- The tourism and leisure industry is pivotal to the Highland economy, contributing almost 1 billion pounds annually, but major sections of it are vulnerable to the current restrictions. The need for coordinated investment is highlighted in Growing Sustainable Tourism and sets out a number of ways in which the Plan can help support the industry to grow over the long term.
- Supporting a strong and dynamic construction industry is important not only for the jobs it supports but for the creation of new homes to ensure social equality and wellbeing. As set out in 1.2.3 'Growing the most sustainable places' and 1.2.4 'Delivering affordable housing' sections, we are proposing a number of changes which promote development, overcome barriers and ensure sites are viable.
- With crisis brings opportunity and we want to grab hold of the positive social and environmental impacts brought about by recent changes to the way we work, travel, interact with each other and use key facilities. As set out in 1.2.6 'Creating a more healthy, sustainable transport network', we want to take full advantage of the shift towards active travel, connecting our towns and villages and making them easier to get about.
- 1.2.5 'Matching development with infrastructure capacity' highlights importance of digital connectivity and this has been brought to the fore with the need for people to work from

home, online education and more people dependent on online shopping and accessing services.

- Employment land sets out our analysis of the commercial property markets and the steps we are proposing to provide the range of opportunities needed to support the recovery and deliver our vision for the economy.

Beyond the immediate crisis, the Highlands will remain one of the best places in the UK to grow and thrive. As set out in the Highland Council's [indicative Regional Spatial Strategy \(iRSS\)](#)⁽¹⁵⁾ submission to Scottish Government for the National Planning Framework (NPF) we aim to further diversify and transition to a green economy. We will achieve this by capitalising on our unique natural assets to create high value jobs and capture opportunities such as the ability to become a global centre of excellence in the renewable energy and reinforcing Highland's reputation as one of the world's most attractive tourist destinations. As we plan for the recovery and transition of our economy, we must recognise the shift in business models and embrace the digital and climate change opportunities that have arisen to transform our economy to be robust and able to thrive.

Employment land

The Plan needs to identify an adequate supply and location of employment land to meet the needs of existing and new businesses in all sectors. The Monitoring Report set out in more detail the supply and demand pressures within the commercial property market. Within the industrial property market, there is a relatively old stock of premises but demand remains high. Without investment, this may pose a major risk to the area's future competitiveness and could restrict economic growth. Work is currently underway to redevelop the former Longman landfill site for business and industrial uses, however, this alone will not meet all future needs.

Pressure for new distribution and warehousing centres has been on the increase across the UK. Whilst previously these would typically have been located in the Central Belt, there is growing pressure for these facilities within the Inner Moray Firth area. We think that strategic employment sites which have good transport links, such as Inverness Airport Business Park and the former Longman landfill, provide some of the best locations for these uses.

15 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/927/national_planning_framework

There also appears to be strong demand for, and significant under investment in, small scale industrial units which serve local businesses and communities. These units form an important part of the commercial property market providing incubator and start up opportunities. Opportunities to acquire land and investment in opening them up for industrial uses in or around Inverness will be needed to reverse recent trends and address the demand.

Demand for office property, however, even before the COVID crisis, was comparatively weak. The stock of office premises is comparatively modern and plentiful in key locations but there is a distinct variation in land values across the Plan area. Reports suggest that a lasting impact of the current crisis could be that more people will work from home and demand for suitable home working environments will increase. For these reasons, we do not think there is a need to allocate significantly more land for office development.

The aIMFLDP allocated strategic business sites at Inverness Campus and Inverness Airport Business Park and large industrial sites along the Cromarty and Moray Firths mainly for the energy sector or other single user enterprises. Whilst sites at Nigg, Invergordon Harbour and the Campus have seen considerable growth since the plan was adopted, many of the other sites have not come forward at the rate expected.

The retail property market in the Inner Moray Firth area continues to be relatively subdued due mainly to changing consumer shopping behaviour. Where proposals do come forward, the Town Centre First Policy will help to direct developments towards our established town centres.

To capture the unique economic and regeneration opportunities arising from a multi-billion pound, 50 year pipeline of renewable energy projects in the Moray Firth, an ambitious and collaborative partnership of private and public sector organisations known as [Opportunity Cromarty Firth](https://opportunitycromartyfirth.co.uk/)⁽¹⁶⁾ has been set up. The consortium is currently preparing a bid for Freeport status, which forms part of UK Government's post-Brexit economic growth strategy. This would stimulate significant economic activity and employment, and attract inward investment in Highland communities, thereby driving economic recovery. At present we believe that, on the whole, the large amount of employment land currently allocated around the Cromarty Firth is sufficient. However, a degree of flexibility will be required to maximise the opportunities which may arise in the future.

16 <https://opportunitycromartyfirth.co.uk/>

Strategic and Other Employment Sites

Preferred approach

We will continue to support and allocate larger, strategic employment development sites such as Cromarty Firth Port, Former Longman Landfill site and Inverness Campus. Sites which are not located within a Main Settlement, including Inverness Airport Business Park, Nigg and Whiteness, will be identified as Economic Development Areas (EDAs) in the Plan.

We also wish to allocate a wide range of other business and industrial land within the Plan's Main Settlements. Typically, these will support the expansion or development of vacant plots within existing business and industrial parks.

We want to provide greater support for smaller scale multi-purpose industrial/business uses. Due to the lack of sites being suggested for these uses, to achieve this we think there is merit in introducing a new policy that requires a proportion of land to be made available for such uses in larger development sites. This policy would only be applied in areas which have been identified as having sufficient levels of demand for employment accommodation. If land is made available then there is greater scope for new models of developing and managing these properties, such as a community trust. Small scale commercial buy-to-let is also increasingly attractive to investors as they can offer a good rate of return, particularly as residential buy-to-let has seen many regulatory and tax changes recently.

To help provide certainty and reduce the risk for developers and businesses, we think that the Plan should introduce a framework for Masterplan Consent Areas (MCAs) to be identified. These would essentially grant up-front consents for planned development. MCAs would be a useful, proactive tool to promote and incentivise investment in development by providing consent in advance for specified types of development, in carefully defined circumstances, in a particular area. It can also set out up-front costs and help coordinate the delivery of necessary infrastructure.

Non-preferred approach

The allocation of business and industrial land is a fundamental requirement of preparing a local development plan and we don't think there is a reasonable alternative. However, we could choose not to introduce a new policy which would require developers to set land aside for employment uses. Instead, we could rely on developers to incorporate these opportunities at the planning application stage. We don't think this is suitable as there is unlikely to be a financial incentive to developers to do so.

In responding to the current crisis and in preparation for Brexit, other options are set out below. However, with the economic and social changes resulting from the COVID crisis still emerging we are currently presenting these as alternative suggestions. We will be considering the options further as more information becomes available. In the meantime we would welcome your comments on them and any further suggestions you may have:

- We could introduce a more flexible change-of-use policy to better respond to changes experienced in certain working environments. For example, we could give greater support for the conversion of business or retail parks to other uses, such as residential or industrial space.
- The Council could also introduce a more supportive policy for larger scale inward investment developments which generate significant employment wherever they are proposed unless they cause significant adverse effects in terms of infrastructure provision or environmental impacts. This would go further than HwLDP Policy 43 Business and Industrial Land which already provides a level of flexibility for emerging industries in where they can be located.

Growing sustainable tourism

Alongside the continued growth of other sectors, the tourism industry has fast become an important factor in sustaining employment and economic activity in both urban and rural communities. Whilst the COVID-19 outbreak has presented major challenges to the industry we are hopeful that the Highland tourist experience becomes more sought after than ever before and it bounces back. We therefore want to set a positive framework for development which increases the length of peoples stay and visitor spending and promote a wider spread of sustainable tourist attractions.

In March this year, the [new national tourism strategy](#)⁽¹⁷⁾ was published which aims to create "responsible tourism for a sustainable future". We support this vision and want to support the sector to grow. To achieve this we need to make the most of our existing assets and ensure that they deliver high quality, sustainable and authentic visitor experiences.

Within the Inner Moray Firth area, there are a number of well known tourist destinations but no more so than Loch Ness. A report in 2018 found that Loch Ness generates nearly £41 million each year towards the Scottish economy. Despite this, it is widely acknowledged that it is underdeveloped compared to similar internationally renowned destinations and has greater potential for the local economy and the communities surrounding the loch. The recent and possible future enhancement

17 <https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/scotland-outlook-2030-download>

of cruise boat reception, embarkation and other facilities at Dochgarroch provides a good example of how existing Loch Ness tourism assets can be better harnessed and the overall number of visitors increased but at a location with good accessibility by all means of travel not just by private car.

Growing Sustainable Tourism

Preferred Approach

We think the Plan should designate Loch Ness and its surrounding area as an "Area of Outstanding Tourist Potential" to provide greater support for tourism development, lever funding for the infrastructure that supports tourism, and to help strengthen local communities. This designation would be particularly supportive of proposals which diversify the geographic spread and type of destinations, facilities and attractions on offer. By encouraging visitors to explore further it will help lengthen their stay in the area and avoid the adverse effects of certain destinations reaching saturation point.

The designation of the area reflects work currently being undertaken by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, with support from The Highland Council, Scottish Canals and Visit Scotland, to produce a strategy for Loch Ness to coordinate public-sector support and resources and stimulate private-sector investment in the area. A draft of this strategy and consultation on it is expected during 2020.

There are a number of other places within the Plan area which have an underdeveloped tourism sector and we think there is great scope for the expansion and creation of sustainable tourist facilities. For example, whilst Easter Ross is on the North Coast 500 route, it is generally considered underdeveloped from a tourism point of view. Land at North Sutor which has been put forward for a mixture of leisure facilities and tourist accommodation based around the prominent landscape setting and rich heritage could provide a major boost to the area. Opportunities for tourism developments continue to exist along the A96 corridor with existing consent at Castle Stuart and Delnies. Fort George also presents an opportunity for conversion to tourism and leisure uses if and when the Ministry of Defence ceases its military operations on the site.

Alternative approach

We could do nothing to manage the adverse environmental and other effects of increasing visitor numbers. However, we believe that better management and some diversion of these pressures coupled with investment in infrastructure facilities to support them, would be a preferable option.

1.2.3 Growing the most sustainable places

Population change and housing needs

The latest forecasts for the Inner Moray Firth's future population indicate stability rather than rapid growth. This is due in main to a fall in birth rates, but the forecast level of net migration and the decline in average household size are other key factors affecting the number of future households and future housing needs. We recognise that very recent and impending issues at the national level – namely the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit – and early evidence indicates that the pandemic may be leading to increased levels of net migration in Highland as people look to relocate to more rural areas.

Evidence indicates that affordability of housing is a really important issue for the Highlands. At the national level access to private market housing is not possible for a higher proportion of the population than previously considered ([2020 Shelter Report](#)⁽¹⁸⁾). In Scotland 62% of new households are unable to afford open market housing. As such, the need for affordable housing is increasing. 1.2.4 'Delivering affordable housing' explores in more detail the steps that could be taken to address the ongoing affordable housing needs.

These issues are critical in identifying the amount of land that needs to be allocated for all types of housing in the Inner Moray Firth area. The [Monitoring Report](#)⁽¹⁹⁾ gives more detail on this topic.

The most recent Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) published in 2015 showed that 11,829 new homes were considered to be required over the next 20 years including affordable housing. It should be noted that these totals are averages over 20 years and that the 2015 HNDA on which they area based assumed that the backlog of existing affordable need (defined as 1,555 units in 2015) would be cleared over the first 10 years.

As set out in more detail within 1.2.4 'Delivering affordable housing', the HNDA shows that, despite increases in the supply of new affordable homes, it has not cleared the backlog of people on the Highland Housing Register and the need for affordable housing has actually risen.

18 https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1925668/Affordable_Housing_Need_in_Scotland_Post-21_final_report.pdf/_nocache

19 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3

Table 2 20 Year Inner Moray Firth Plan Area Housing Requirements Based on 2015 HNDA

	Inverness HMA	Easter Ross HMA	Mid Ross HMA	Nairn HMA	Wester Ross HMA	Plan Area Totals
Affordable Sector	2,919	509	589	341	57	4,415
Open Market Sector	5,164	702	910	538	100	7,414
Total	8,083	1,211	1,499	879	157	11,829

The figures shown in Table 2 '20 Year Inner Moray Firth Plan Area Housing Requirements Based on 2015 HNDA' have influenced the number and housing capacity of preferred sites in this Main Issues Report. In the next few months, significantly more up to date information will become available, including the 2018 based population and household forecasts, and will be incorporated into the new HNDA. Once confirmed, this evidence will help produce the 2020 HNDA which, along with feedback from the MIR consultation and further consideration of local circumstances and needs, will be used to inform the finalised totals and site selection within the next stage of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

Housing Requirements

Preferred approach

We believe that the Plan should identify enough land to accommodate the number of dwellings which will be estimated using the process set out in this section and detailed in the accompanying [Monitoring Report](#)⁽²⁰⁾. We believe that using the 2020 HNDA along with feedback from the MIR consultation and further consideration of local circumstances is the optimum way to plan future housing requirements.

20 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3

Alternative approach

We could increase or decrease the future housing requirements by varying the assumptions we make in our forecasts. However, we would need to be informed of better data or evidence to support an alternative approach.

Settlement hierarchy

Taking account of the housing requirements shown in Table 2 '20 Year Inner Moray Firth Plan Area Housing Requirements Based on 2015 HNDA', the other main issue of tackling climate change, and the importance of protecting the viability and vitality of our town and city centres, we believe that the Plan should direct a higher proportion of future development to more sustainable locations. In practice, this means classifying the places within the Inner Moray Firth into a hierarchy according to their sustainable travel mode, access to existing and planned future, employment, education, public transport and other services and infrastructure capacity. This is shown in Table 3 'Settlement Hierarchy'. In simple terms, the Plan intends to direct most future growth to the settlements with the best existing or committed future access to all these facilities, services and opportunities. Unsurprisingly, Tier 1 settlements include Inverness City, existing towns with good active travel and public transport links such as Beaulieu and Tain, and the committed new town at Tornagrain. In contrast, Tier 4 settlements offer very limited employment, transport options and services. As these settlements will be almost exclusively dependent on car based transport, we don't think that they are appropriate locations for any significant development. Because of these considerations Cawdor, Contin, and Inchmore are suggested for reclassification from main settlements to growing settlements. However, within all these settlements, we will still support the principle of infill development, refurbishment of existing properties and redevelopment of brownfield (previously developed) sites. This hierarchy has influenced the number and size (likely housing capacity) of preferred sites in this Main Issues Report.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues | Lèirsinn, Builean agus Prìomh Chùisean

Table 3 Settlement Hierarchy

Scale of Growth	Sustainability	Hierarchy	Tier	Settlements/Locations
Strategic	Most sustainable	Main Settlements	1	Alness, Beaully, Dingwall, Invergordon, Inverness City, Muir of Ord, Nairn, Tain, Tornagrain.
Modest	Sustainable		2	Ardersier, Conon Bridge, Drumnadrochit, Evanton, Fort Augustus, North Kessock.
Local	Partially sustainable		3	Auldearn, Avoch, Croy, Fortrose and Rosemarkie, Kiltarlity, Maryburgh, Seaboard Villages, Strathpeffer, Tomatin.
Limited	Least sustainable		4	Cawdor ⁽¹⁾ , Contin ⁽¹⁾ , Cromarty, Culbokie, Dores, Inchmore ⁽¹⁾ , Kirkhill, Munloch, Tore.
"Infill" only	Growing Settlements	Growing Settlements	5	Abriachan, Balnain, Barbaraville, Cannich, Farr/Inverarnie, Foyers, Garve, Gorthleck, Hill of Fearn, Inver, Milton of Kildary, Marybank, Portmahomack, Rhicullen/Newmore, Tomich, Whitebridge.
Typically single unit development	Countryside	Countryside	6	All housing groups not otherwise classified as part of a settlement. Wider open countryside (no general restriction). "Hinterland" open countryside (general restriction on housing).

1. Settlement suggested for reclassification from main settlements to growing settlements.

Settlement Hierarchy

Preferred approach

We believe that the Plan should direct most future development to environmentally sustainable and economically viable locations. The hierarchy of settlements and other locations in Table 3 'Settlement Hierarchy' and the varying level of future growth envisaged for each place should help achieve this. The settlements listed in the hierarchy which have an asterisk in front of them are proposed to be reclassified from Main Settlements to Growing Settlements.

Alternative approach

Each listed place could be moved to a different tier of the hierarchy. However, we believe that we have assigned each place to the correct tier on the basis of its relative accessibility (by environmentally sustainable travel modes) to existing or committed future facilities, services and opportunities.

Growing settlements

The aIMFLDP contains an "Other Settlements" policy which, within a defined list of places, supports a lesser scale of development than within the "Main Settlements" but a more positive approach than within the countryside. Settlements currently included are places which have/had at least one community facility (e.g. a school or public hall). We intend to bring our policy approach to these smallest settlements in line with our other local development plans for Highland. We wish to call them "Growing Settlements" and not use the existence of a facility as the sole reason for including or excluding places from the list. Instead, we will only include places that have an established, sizeable cluster of development, have some development pressure, few environmental constraints to development, and facility/service networks that can accommodate additional housebuilding. Because of these new criteria we do not think that Advie, Ardross, Bunchrew, Croachy, Cullicudden, Daviot, Dochgarroch, Easter Kinkell, Ferness, Invermoriston, Kilcoy, Kildary, Kilmorack, Mulbuie, Pitcalnie, Resolis and Struy should be identified as Growing Settlements. Development proposals in places which are not take forward as Growing Settlements will be considered against the [Housing in the Countryside](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/683410/housing_in_the_countryside)⁽²¹⁾ planning policy. Dochgarroch has economic rather than housing development potential and therefore we propose (in the economy main issue section) that it be referenced as a growth area for sustainable tourism rather than as a Growing Settlement.

21 https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/683410/housing_in_the_countryside

These are listed as Tier 5 settlements in Table 3 'Settlement Hierarchy'. For each potential "Growing Settlement" this Main Issues Report sets out draft key issues and placemaking priorities for comment. Images are included for each settlement but please note that this is for illustrative purposes only and that the geographic extent of these images is of no policy significance. Once finalised, these will be applied in determining planning applications in these places.

Growing Settlements Policy

Preferred approach

We wish to support the principle of limited "infill" development within the Plan area's smallest settlements listed in Tier 5 of Table 3 'Settlement Hierarchy'. The following draft policy would apply to planning proposals within these settlements.

Development proposals that are contained within, round off or consolidate the listed Growing Settlements will be assessed against the extent to which they:

- take account of the issues and placemaking priorities identified for the individual Growing Settlements;
- are likely to help sustain, enhance or add to facilities with proposals being located within active travel distance of any facility present;
- are compatible in terms of use, spacing, character and density with development within that settlement and demonstrate high quality design;
- can utilise spare capacity in the infrastructure network (education, roads, other transport, water, sewerage etc.) or new/improved infrastructure can be provided in a cost efficient manner, taking into account the Council's requirement for connection to the public sewer other than in exceptional circumstances;
- avoid a net loss of amenity or recreational areas significant to the local community; and,
- would not result in adverse impact on any other locally important natural or cultural heritage feature, important public viewpoint/vista or open space.

Proposals which demonstrate overall conformity with the above criteria will be in accordance with this policy.

Alternative approach

We could instead carry forward the policy from the aIMFLDP unchanged which would support development in a longer list of places. We don't favour this alternative approach because we believe that these are places in less environmentally and economically sustainable locations and/or they lack a reasonably sized, clustered, settlement core.

Self build housing development

As well as setting out the amount and location of new housing, it is important that we provide people with a choice of housing types. We discuss meeting the needs of the ageing population and delivering affordable housing in other parts of this Main Issues Report but we believe that this diversity should also include housing land within our main settlements for self build. We define self build as where an individual commissions or (whether acting alone or with other individuals) is personally involved in the design and construction of a dwelling that is intended to be the individual's main residence once it is built. This includes "custom build" which is essentially self build homes facilitated in some way by a volume housebuilder.

Research shows there is strong demand for self build and that there are a number of benefits which can be gained from increasing the supply of plots. In recent decades, within the Inner Moray Firth, like within many other parts of Scotland, new housing has been largely delivered by "volume" housebuilders. Whilst this is an important part of the housing market, there is growing recognition that self build in urban areas can play an important role in the supply of new housing. As it would essentially be a new part of the market in some urban areas, it could complement volume housebuilders in promoting faster sales and quicker build out rates. It could also provide a much needed boost for smaller sized developers which have declined in number significantly over recent years. Furthermore, self build can contribute towards placemaking by delivering greater diversity and innovation and enhancing the character of our neighbourhoods. Evidence shows that as self build is often taken up by older people looking to build a more suitable home it can even be a good way of providing housing for an ageing population.

As one of main barriers to self build has been the lack of available sites, we think that the best way to increase the number opportunities is by introducing a new policy which requires a certain proportion of land to be available for self build within larger housing developments. We recognise that the detail of such a policy and how it's applied must be subject to consultation with the development industry and all other affected parties. We also don't want such a policy to undermine the economic viability of sites confirmed through this Plan. To ensure this, the policy's application will be subject to proof of demand for self build in that part of the Inner Moray Firth. The forthcoming, statutory register of interest in self build will provide the evidence necessary to apply the policy. Where registered demand doesn't translate uptake of plots over a defined period then that portion of the site would revert back to general demand housing.

Self build may also be appropriate in rural areas especially where suitable sites are not available within nearby settlements. We will analyse the future statutory register to see where such interest originates and whether both the affordable and market sectors can meet it on allocated sites within settlements or whether a more flexible approach is required for example by broadening the suggested policy approach to include consideration of smaller development sites in rural areas.

Self Build Housing Policy

Preferred approach

We intend to introduce a policy that will require developers to provide a proportion of self build plots on larger housing sites. Our draft policy for discussion is as follows.

Each developer of a large (50 or more dwellings) planning application will be required to safeguard and adequately service part (a minimum of 10% of the application's total dwelling capacity) of that application site for self build plots. The exact number, location, size and shape of those plots should take account of the Council's statutory register of self build housing interest - i.e. best match the supply of plots to local, registered demand for those plots. Where registered demand doesn't translate into self build plot sales over a minimum, adequate marketing period of one year then that part of the site will revert back to being available for general demand housing. The Council will provide guidance to accompany this Plan which will define self build, adequate marketing, and adequate servicing. The guidance will also explain the relationship of this policy to those on placemaking, affordable housing and developer contributions.

Alternative approaches

This is a developing planning policy topic so there are several alternatives on which we invite comment:

- Should the site size threshold and minimum percentage requirement be higher or lower than 50 dwellings and 10%?
- Could more self build housing development be achieved by earmarking certain housing sites only for self build development particularly where the landowner agrees?
- Should the public purse subsidise or otherwise financially incentivise (for example by reducing developer contributions for the same application) the provision of self build plots?

Town centres

One way to achieve this Plan's Outcomes in terms of connectivity, accessibility, viability and reducing the climate change effects of travel is to safeguard and bolster town centres. A network of centres that support the right scale and mix of commercial, leisure, other employment, and community uses appropriate to that part of the Plan area will help achieve these Outcomes.

Town centres are at the heart of communities and are best placed to be hubs for a wide range of activities. Appropriate development within our town centres has the potential to improve their vitality and viability. This can also ensure that investment in our communities is directed in a way that is most beneficial to residents, employees and visitors to our towns.

Town Centre First Policy

Preferred approach

In order to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres our preferred approach is to introduce a new "Town Centre First Policy". This will effectively replace the "Promoting and Protecting City and Town Centres" in the aIMFLDP. The new Town Centre First Policy will direct all development which generates significant footfall to be located, in the first instance, within the main town centres of the Plan area. The aim is to provide greater support for town centre living and attract a mix of uses which are active throughout the day and evening. This reflects Scottish Planning Policy (2014) and the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan.

At this stage we are proposing to roll forward the Town Centre First policy from the Council's other two area Local Development Plans. However, there is likely to be a rise in vacancy rates as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and we would like to know whether you think there is merit in greater flexibility given to change of use applications as a means of making making our town centres more adaptable.

We think that the Policy should apply to the town centres which play a particularly important economic, social and cultural role within their respective settlement and hinterland. Within the Plan we therefore have identified boundaries for the following places: Alness, Beauly, Dingwall, Invergordon, Inverness City Centre, Muir of Ord, Nairn and Tain. We intend to define town centre boundaries for these places and show them on the maps in the Settlements section of the Plan, also to undertake town centre health checks for them, and use the findings of these checks to develop town centre strategies which will deliver improvements for these centres.

Our draft policy for discussion is as follows:

Development that generates significant footfall will firstly be expected to be located within the town centres of Alness, Beaulay, Dingwall, Invergordon, Inverness City Centre, Muir of Ord, Nairn and Tain as identified by the boundaries on the maps in 3 'Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean'. When identifying sites a sequential assessment will be required demonstrating that all opportunities for regeneration through reuse or redevelopment of existing sites or buildings have been fully explored. Should the scale and type of proposal not be suitable for these locations, edge of town centre locations are favoured second, and then out of centre locations that are, or can be made, easily accessible by a choice of transport modes. This sequential approach does not apply to established uses and land allocations.

Significant footfall developments include:

- retail,
- restaurants,
- commercial,
- leisure uses,
- offices,
- hotels,
- community and cultural heritage facilities, and public buildings including libraries, education and healthcare facilities.

If the Council considers that a proposal may result in an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of any listed town centre, the developer will be required to produce a retail or town centre impact assessment tailored to reflect the scale and function of the town centre in question. The Council will only support proposals accompanied by competent assessments that demonstrate no significant adverse impacts.

A flexible and realistic approach will be required when applying this sequential assessment, however, developers need to consider how appropriate the nature of their proposal is to the scale and function of the centre within which it is proposed. Exceptions may be made for any ancillary uses that support existing and proposed developments.

Proposals for conversion of buildings to residential use in town centres may be supported, providing there is no loss of existing or potential viable footfall generating use(s). Proposals for conversion to residential use must demonstrate that the property has been marketed for its existing use at a reasonable price/rent without success for a minimum period of 6 months.

For vacant upper floor conversions (excluding hotels) support may be given without the requirement for marketing where it can be demonstrated that the proposals would contribute towards a balanced mix of uses.

Alternative approach

We could introduce a more flexible change-of-use policy to respond to likely increases in vacancy rates resulting from the current crisis. For example, we could give greater support for conversion of ground floor retail in town centres and/or reduce the amount of time a property needs to be made available for sale/rent from 12 months to 6 months. These changes are presented as "Alternatives" as we think further information is needed to determine whether it is suitable or not.

Non-preferred approach

Given that Scottish Planning Policy requires us to embed the Town Centre First Principle in our plans then we don't think that there are many reasonable alternatives. Certain changes to the Policy above may provide a more permissive approach but this would probably reduce the level of protection the policy provides. A more rigid approach would be to identify town centre boundaries for all our Main Settlements.

1.2.4 Delivering affordable housing

One of the current priorities facing Highland is how best to increase the number of homes so that everyone has a good quality home that they can afford and that meets their needs. Whilst the Scottish Government is making significant resources available for building affordable homes, the [Housing Need and Demand Assessment^{\(22\)}](#) (HNDA) shows that the need for an affordable home is outstripping the supply. Difficulties in securing land for affordable housing at the right time and in the right places is one of the main limiting factors. Overcoming this issue can help to tackle poverty, give people greater stability and better future prospects.

The Scottish Government has committed to build 50,000 new affordable homes by March 2021 via the More Houses Scotland programme. This scheme has allocated £45.6m to Highland for 2019/20 and £48.4m for 2020/21. Investment has not been confirmed for future years but it is anticipated that funding levels will continue at a similar level.

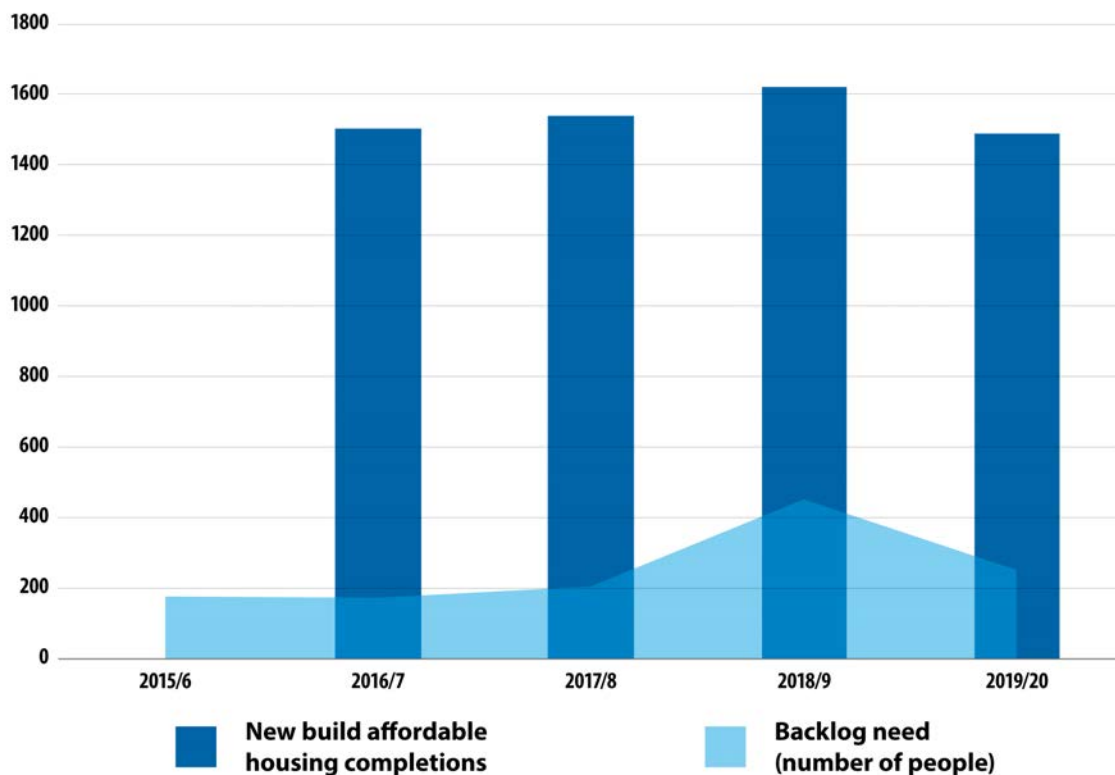
22 https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/13404/housing_need_and_demand_assessment_2015

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues | Lèirsinn, Builean agus Prìomh Chùisean

In the last five years, 1,683 affordable homes have been built in Highland, of which 1,047 have been in the Inner Moray Firth area. Many of these developments have helped to regenerate our town centres, bring brownfield land back into use and sustain communities. The HNDA shows that, despite this increase in supply, it has not cleared the backlog of people on the Highland Housing Register and the need for affordable housing has actually risen. This highlights the ongoing problem of affordability and the need to properly understand the constraints and find new ways of increasing supply.

Figure 1.1 'Affordable housing completions' shows that the delivery of affordable housing has not had an impact on reducing the backlog need. It should be noted that the backlog need is taken as a snapshot taken on 1st April each year and changes daily but the indicative figures allow reasonable assumptions that the housing affordable programme needs to be increased to reach a point where the backlog can be cleared.

Figure 1.1 Affordable housing completions



One of the main challenges affordable housing providers face in building new housing is their ability to secure land for development where it's most needed. This is a particular problem in Inverness which has the highest proportion of the need in Highland. Whilst the aIMFLDP allocated a very large amount of housing land, much of it is controlled by volume house builders. In most cases, affordable housing providers are unable to properly compete in securing ownership/options

on strategic development sites. This has caused a reliance the business plans of the volume house builders for a key part of the ongoing supply of affordable housing. In some situations the release of the land for affordable housing has been programmed in later phases of development. It is felt by some in the housing industry that without a radical change in the housing market it will be difficult to overcome these issues.

As it currently stands, the Council has limited ability to address this issue on its own. In terms of planning policy, certain mechanisms that we have available at present, such as increasing the required level of affordable housing contributions, will likely impact on the viability and effectiveness of specific sites. There is also a potential that these measures could be counterproductive if they result in private sector development not coming forward.

We will continue to work with the Scottish Government and others to assess the barriers to affordable housing delivery and introduce innovative ways in which they can be overcome, such as the use of the landbank and infrastructure loan fund to secure sites. New mechanisms will be required, however, to realise the next stages of the affordable housing programme and provide the social infrastructure needed to support the communities. For example, greater ability to forward fund essential infrastructure would better allow for long term Council capital programming.

To help tackle these challenges for affordable housing delivery the Scottish Land Commission recommend a number of approaches including enhancing the ability to assemble land, streamlining the compulsory purchase process and introducing land value capture measures. The introduction of a strategic investment fund or other innovative finance model would also help ensure that local authorities and housing associations can better compete with private sector house builders in the development market. Better resourcing would allow the public sector to lead in assembling and preparing land and then delivering the necessary levels of affordable housing and securing a diversity of builders. More control over the delivery of the site allows for greater priority on placemaking, infrastructure delivery and a more effective response to the climate emergency. Within the Inner Moray Firth area, this could be best applied to strategic sites, such as land identified in the [Inverness East Development Brief](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712056/inverness_east_development_brief)⁽²³⁾.

23 https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712056/inverness_east_development_brief

Affordable Housing Interventions

Preferred approach

We think that the best way to deliver affordable housing is a combination of one or more of the following:

- We are considering the introduction of a new policy which would set a higher level of affordable housing contributions in places which are shown to be in greater need. The results of the HNDA would help to influence the rate and geographical area to which it would apply. At present we consider an increase to 35% would be most appropriate and apply only to Inverness settlement development area. The policy would continue to apply to developments of 4 or more units but will represent an increase from the current 25% which is the standard rate across areas of Highland. We would welcome further input during the Main Issues Report consultation from key partners and the private sector to fully assess this proposal.
- Embed within the new policy, measures which ensure that the delivery of affordable housing components of private sector developments are prioritised within the early phases of development. An opportunity could also be provided for a much higher percentage of affordable units being delivered within the first phase with the percentage being tapered down in later phases so long as there is still tenure diversity within each part of the neighbourhood or community. As we are mindful of maintaining the viability of allocated development sites this option could form an alternative to an increase in percentage of affordable housing contributions rates.
- As outlined in other Main Issues we support the principle of higher density development as a means of improving placemaking and creating more sustainable, sociable and accessible neighbourhoods. Increasing density can also make developments, such as affordable housing schemes, more viable.

Non-preferred approach

We could continue to allocate a very generous supply of housing land - as has been the approach over at least the last decade - to increase competition between landowners and result in reduced land values. However, this approach has been shown not to deliver the scale of affordable housing required and it has led to significant challenges to site delivery and infrastructure planning.

We could also not increase the affordable housing contribution from 25%. However, the current framework is not creating enough opportunities for addressing the affordable housing need in the most pressurised areas.

Whilst older plans allocated land exclusively for affordable housing, this option is not preferred because it may lead to suggestions from landowners for "exceptions" sites in unsustainable locations and result in a segregation of tenures.

1.2.5 Matching development with infrastructure capacity

In planning future communities there needs to be close alignment between development and the management of existing and new infrastructure. The capacity of existing services and infrastructure, such as schools, energy, transport and community facilities, and making best use of these, are critical factors for where development can happen. It is increasingly important that digital infrastructure is prioritised as much as infrastructure for physical connectivity. This is not only an essential part of creating and maintaining successful places, but is also required to help achieve other Plan Outcomes, such as creating sustainable transport networks and addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

Highland Council's proposition for the future, which is set out in their [indicative Regional Spatial Strategy \(iRSS\)](#)⁽²⁴⁾ submission to Scottish Government for the National Planning Framework (NPF), shows the importance of infrastructure for the Highland region. It is hoped that the new combined NPF4 and Scottish Planning Policy will help to create a consistent approach to the coordination and delivery of high quality digital infrastructure. The Inner Moray Firth area provides infrastructure and services for not just those that live, work and visit there but to serve the wider Highlands and Islands. In this regard, we have been working closely with other stakeholders to identify the necessary infrastructure requirements to support our communities and deliver the collective outcomes. This has helped shape the [spatial strategy](#)⁽²⁵⁾ and Table 3 'Settlement Hierarchy' which show where we want to direct growth.

There are certain places, particularly in Inverness, which currently have infrastructure capacity issues but which will continue to be the focus of housing and commercial development. Whilst this will lead to further pressure on the Council's capital programme for infrastructure provision, it will require a jointed up public sector/private developer funding to help address the issue.

24 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/927/national_planning_framework

25 https://highland.objective.co.uk/ecc/editor_frame.html

The Plan will set out the headline infrastructure requirements for settlement and site allocations through Placemaking Priorities and Developer Requirements. The Plan's Delivery Programme will be used to monitor and implement the infrastructure needed to support the future growth of our communities. As set out in [the new Planning Act^{\(26\)}](#), the Delivery Programme will be embedded as a multi agency tool to help coordinate and better manage resources and infrastructure delivery. In combination, these measures will help deliver the infrastructure needed using tools such as conditions on planning permissions and developer contributions.

There are undoubtedly, however, major challenges in delivering suitable infrastructure, both to serve existing communities and to support new ones. It is difficult to reconcile the ability to address existing priorities and support the area to grow. We want to know if you think there are other ways in which to make the most of infrastructure and how to manage this issue.

The financial viability of development is a fundamental consideration for us as it not only ensures an effective land supply but that infrastructure will be delivered when needed. Much of the debate about development is about infrastructure provision or financial payments required to provide the services affected by the development. As the costs of construction are largely fixed, in many situations the viability of a site will depend on the landowner's understanding the infrastructure obligations and having realistic expectations as to the value of their land.

As identified in other Main Issues, higher densities can not only play an important role in promoting active travel, providing better access to facilities, creating good street design and supporting an ageing population, but also make developments more viable. This would help allow for key infrastructure, such as active travel connections, bus services or playparks to be delivered earlier.

Matching Development with Infrastructure Capacity

Preferred approach

We think that the following measures will help to ensure that development and infrastructure capacity are better aligned:

- Maintain the aim of directing growth to areas that have existing spare infrastructure capacity.
- To ensure that measures are put in place for the delivery of high quality digital infrastructure as a standard requirement for all development.
- Set out the headline infrastructure requirements for settlement and site allocations through Placemaking Priorities and Developer Requirements.

26 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/contents/enacted>

- Promote the Delivery Programme as the principal tool for monitoring and implementing the infrastructure needed to support the delivery of the proposals and sites shown in the Plan.
- Avoid allocating sites where we consider that the full infrastructure requirements will likely make the site unviable.
- Introduce development frameworks at Proposed Plan stage for larger allocations to ensure placemaking and infrastructure requirements are better understood by key stakeholders.
- Make sure that development proposals clearly demonstrate that mitigation measures are in place to deal with all infrastructure implications, including surface water drainage and transport requirements.
- Take forward a similar "Delivering Development" policy as included in [WestPlan](#)⁽²⁷⁾ and [CaSPlan](#)⁽²⁸⁾ to help ensure that development is taken forward in a coordinated and sustainable way with infrastructure provision delivered when needed.
- Ensure that higher density developments commit to the earliest possible delivery of key infrastructure.
- Identify a more specific indicative housing capacity for each allocated development site tailored to the particular circumstances of the site and settlement and require a stronger justification if a developer proposes to vary significantly from it.

Alternative approach

We think that the measures outlined above are all reasonable and represent good practice in better matching development with infrastructure capacity. As a result, we haven't set out alternatives, but if you disagree then please tell us how you would do things differently.

1.2.6 Creating a more healthy, sustainable transport network

Everyone in Highland should have fair access to affordable ways to travel sustainably. This means walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport should be the safest, most efficient and reliable choices for moving around.

This Main Issues Report proposes an ambitious new strategy for transport in the Inner Moray Firth area. This topic is far-reaching and therefore goes into detail in this section about the range of transport issues the Plan needs to address. It seeks to transform transport to tackle the climate

27 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/582/west_highland_and_islands_local_development_plan

28 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/283/caithness_and_sutherland_local_development_plan

and ecological emergency by ensuring road space is shared equally between the different transport modes that need it and that sustainable transport options are prioritised, but do not unfairly disadvantage those that do need to travel by car. A detailed Transport Appraisal accompanies this work and was used to inform the preparation of this part of the Main Issues Report.

The evidence is compelling that we cannot simply continue to build more roads to tackle congestion and encourage never-ending growth in car travel. Looking back at the places that have been delivered in the Plan area, road infrastructure has led to impacts on the quality of some places that are now dominated by the roads that serve them, making walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport less safe, attractive and competitive than driving, creating car-based living. We think this approach has to change to tackle the range of problems society now faces. The Scottish Government too is recognising this need for a new approach through its Programme for Government commitments, including £1 billion for sustainable transport, and its change of emphasis through its second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2). We have set out our transport ambitions at the Highland level through our [Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy](#)⁽²⁹⁾.

The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed restrictions on people's movement. The Scottish Government provided direct funding to support communities to physically distance through their Spaces for People programme. The Highland Council secured £1.97m from this fund, with around a quarter of this committed to the IMF area. The pandemic has resulted in there being less traffic on the roads and more people walking, wheeling and cycling. This positive experience in our communities of sustainable travel, coupled with a rapid transition to home-working for many people, means the future of how and when we travel is uncertain, but that we now have the chance to redefine the norm, and create a transport system that can respond to the global challenges we face. We want to use the experience of travel during the current pandemic to demonstrate the transformation that is possible to move to cleaner, healthier travel choices. It gives us the opportunity to provide a stepping stone to change the emphasis of the Council's future investment programme towards supporting sustainable transport infrastructure, such as walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. This does not necessarily mean increasing costs, but rather making best use of new infrastructure to support lots of modes of travel, for the same cost as building traditional transport infrastructure, such as roads, for example by allocating lane space for bike lanes, bus lanes and vehicle lanes where space allows.

Creating a fair and equal transport network

To ensure fair and equal access to transport, we think that new development should be located close to facilities and services and well connected to a sustainable transport network. Higher density (more homes in a given area) development can contribute to this by ensuring more people

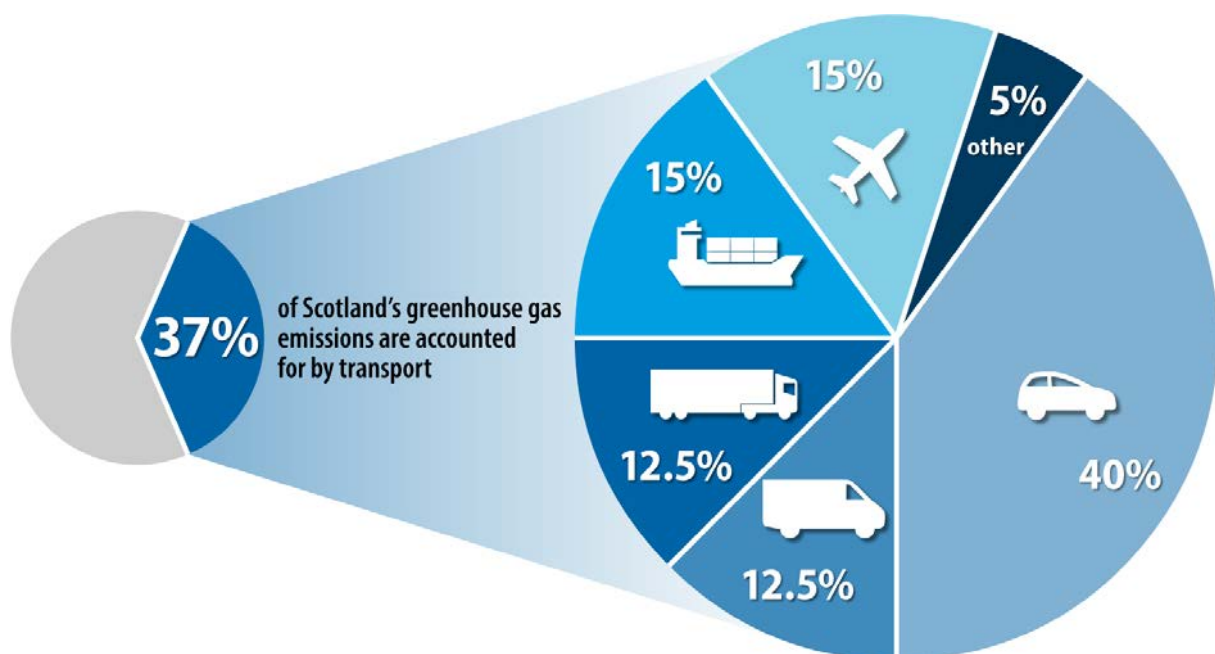
29 <https://consult.highland.gov.uk/portal/dp/npf4/npf4?pointId=5619115#document-5619115>

are close to sustainable transport corridors, meaning they support demand for, and use of, these modes. [Research](#) ⁽³⁰⁾ has shown that over a million people in Scotland live in transport poverty and most of the areas at risk are in Highland. The homes earning the least have the lowest access to a private car, meaning they depend more on other forms of transport ([only 41% of households earnings are up to £10,000 have access to a car](#) ⁽³¹⁾). Therefore the way we grow our villages, towns and city will determine how fair it is for different people in our communities to access education, employment, services and leisure opportunities. Beyond poverty, our transport system must also be designed to meet the needs of our communities, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

Using sustainable transport to tackle the climate and ecological emergency

By creating a transport network that promotes more sustainable ways to move around, we can decarbonise transport and reduce its impact on climate. The Highland Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration brings transport into the spotlight because it is at the heart of enabling Highland to become a low emissions region. The Scottish Government's National Transport Strategy highlights that 37% of greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland were from transport and that 40% of these emissions come from cars.

Figure 1.2 Breakdown of Scotland's transport emissions adapted from NTS2, Scottish Government, 2020



30 https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/2880/transport_poverty_in_scotland_2016.pdf

31 <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/45852/sct09199889061.pdf>

Recent local [research](#)⁽³²⁾ reinforces these national findings, with car-based travel in the Inverness area shown to have the same carbon footprint as the Council's entire operation. Being the most populated and urban area in Highland, this new plan gives us a major opportunity to help tackle the climate and ecological emergency as well as creating greater resilience to change and disruption by enabling a wider range of transport options in the network.

Tackling congestion and enabling a transition to electric vehicles

To tackle congestion, we think the transport network should provide a fair share of space for all types of transport. Tackling congestion is challenging, particularly in some of the area's towns and Inverness, where it is most pronounced. It is [widely accepted](#)⁽³³⁾ that building more roads for cars to tackle congestion does not work. This is because as people see new roads being created, they choose to drive and fill up the new road space, causing more congestion. For a lot of the congested parts of the Inner Moray Firth area there simply is not enough room between buildings and other land uses to build more space for cars, and the costs are often prohibitive. Creating a more varied transport network where walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport are genuinely competitive with driving will make more efficient use of available space in a fairer way for all road users. It will reduce the amount of vehicles on the road, and therefore create more space for those that do need to travel by car.

Whilst new technologies like low-emissions and electric vehicles have potential to decarbonise transport ([excluding the carbon-intensive manufacturing process](#)⁽³⁴⁾) they will not solve the issue of congestion because the same amount of road space is required for these vehicles as is required for fossil fuel vehicles. However, it is important to recognise the potential for such technologies to tackle the area's rural challenges where the only viable mode of transport is often private car. Combined with a range of active travel and public transport interventions in the more urban places, electric vehicles, and in future other alternative technologies such as hydrogen fuel, can contribute to tackling carbon emissions associated with transport. Therefore infrastructure to support the transition to electric vehicles is required during the lifetime of the Plan.

Infrastructure needs for most electric vehicle charging can be met at home, where vehicles are parked in driveways and 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

32 https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/73609/item_15_-_inverness_greenhouse_gas_inventory_report

33 <https://tps.org.uk/public/downloads/96cgz/%20Better%20Planning,%20Better%20Transport,%20Better%20Places%20August%202019.pdf?>

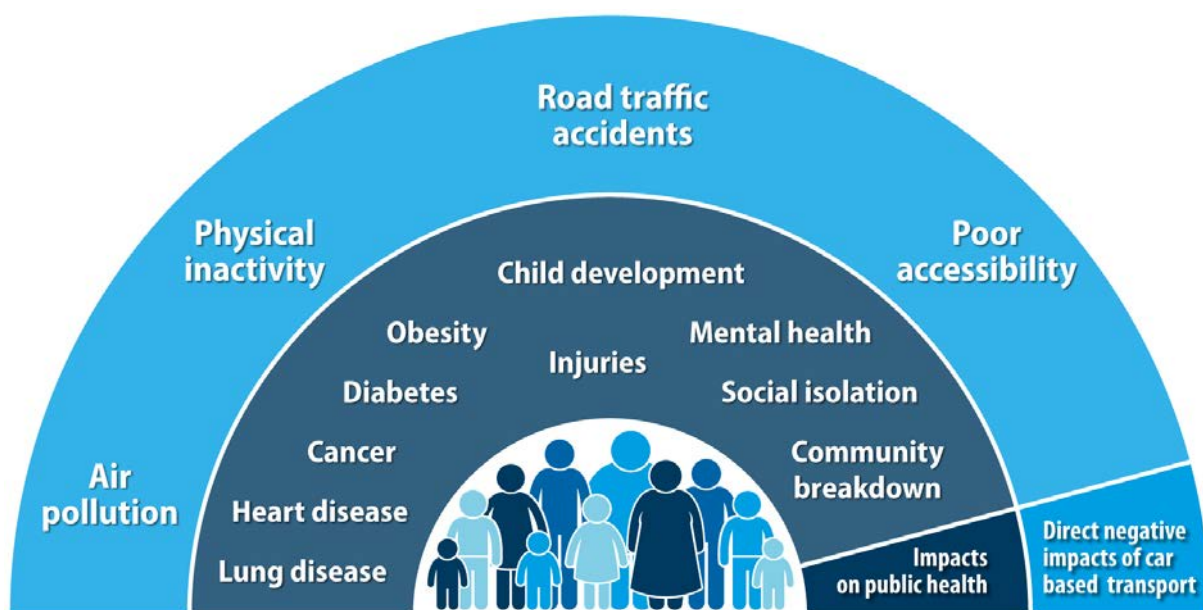
34 https://theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/EV-life-cycle-GHG_ICCT-Briefing_09022018_vF.pdf

investment is required. Work is currently underway with the Council's Climate Change Team, the Energy Savings Trust and Transport Scotland to deliver, and explore further opportunity to deliver, such publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the Plan area.

Using sustainable transport to improve health and wellbeing

To ensure we have a healthy, active population, walking, wheeling and cycling should be the easiest way to move around. We think the location of new development and quality of active travel infrastructure are key to unlocking the area's potential for being more active. There are strong links between inactivity and people's health, with [UK Government guidance](#)⁽³⁵⁾ now recommending that adults are active every day and for at least 150 minutes per week. Motorised transport is directly linked to immediate and longer-term health hazards due to inactivity, air and noise pollution, and increased social isolation, as well as collisions and injuries.

Figure 1.3 Health hazards linked to motorised transport



In Scotland, the [Active Scotland Delivery Plan](#)⁽³⁶⁾ commits to ensuring less use of cars and more journeys by walking, wheeling and cycling. [Recent research](#)⁽³⁷⁾ has shown that the health benefits of cycling in Inverness alone results in a reduction of up to 11,000 GP appointments and reduction in harmful pollutants that reduce air quality, a particular problem in the City Centre, which has a designated [Air Quality Management Area](#)⁽³⁸⁾. The Council is actively working to tackle air pollution

35 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523460/Working_Together_to_Promote_Active_Travel_A_briefing_for_local_authorities.pdf

36 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/active-scotland-delivery-plan/pages/6/>

37 <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life/bike-life-inverness/>

38 https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=374

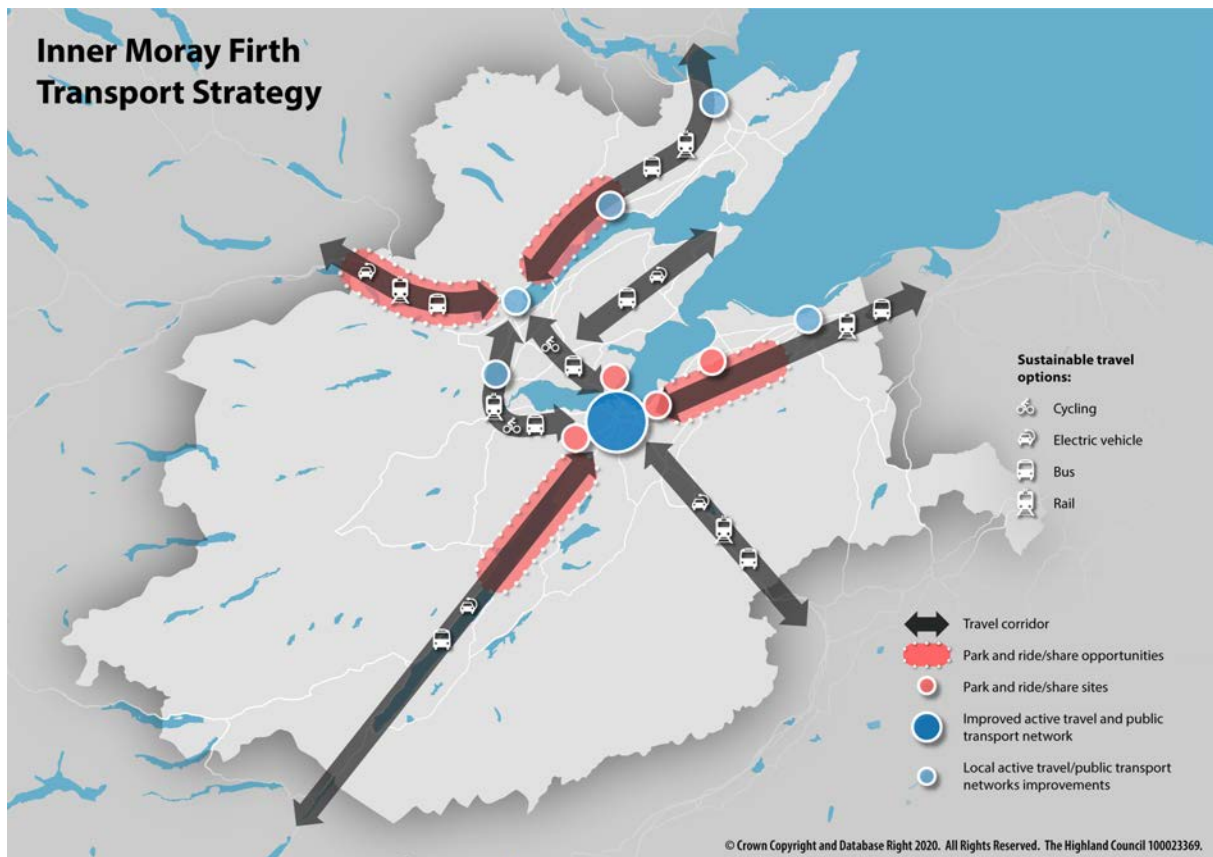
1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues | Lèirsinn, Builean agus Prìomh Chùisean

and has an [Air Quality Action Plan](#)⁽³⁹⁾, the first Action in this plan is to promote smarter travel choices. This means that the more the Plan can do to increase walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, the better chance we have of improving people's health, including through improving air quality.

Developing a new transport strategy

We think the Plan needs to be supported by an ambitious new transport strategy that ensures the creation of a modern, sustainable transport network. This is expressed in the transport strategy drawing below. We think the best way to deliver this strategy is to identify a range of sustainable transport interventions for the Plan area, and to create an ambitious new transport policy, as indicated in the preferred approach shown in Sustainable transport interventions.

Map 1.1 Transport Strategy



39 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/16577/inverness_action_plan.pdf

Sustainable transport interventions

Preferred approach

We think the Plan needs to deliver a vastly improved and sustainable transport network that maximises the shift to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport wherever possible. The Plan needs to continue to ensure that new developments mitigate impacts on roads but must simultaneously create a more ambitious and sustainable transport network. The Plan will identify the range of measures and requirements for transport in settlement maps, including between-settlement active travel connectivity, developer requirements for sites, and in the transport policy described in Sustainable transport policy.

For Inverness this means:

1. Creating an exemplar fully connected active travel network.
2. Prioritising buses on the network, particularly at known congestion points.
3. Creating a network of park and ride sites at entrances to the city.
4. Effective management of city centre parking to support a transition to sustainable travel.
5. Improving traffic management technology to make the existing transport network as efficient as possible.
6. Lowering parking standards where an acceptable level of public transport and active travel provides a viable alternative.

For other towns and villages this means:

1. Maximising the use of and connections to existing and planned new rail halts and bus stops.
2. Creating mini park and ride/park and share sites on strategic routes.
3. Delivering active travel improvements to connect communities within and between towns and villages.
4. Lowering parking standards where an acceptable level of public transport and active travel provides a viable alternative.

For more rural places this means:

1. Maximising the opportunities to utilise rail halts and park and ride/park and share sites.
2. Supporting communities to identify and deliver active travel connections that will make sustainable travel a realistic option.
3. Supporting the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at key destinations that rural communities can benefit from.

Alternative approach

The alternative option would be to continue with the current approach to transport, which relies on assessing individual planning applications against the relevant Highland-wide Local Development Plan policies. This is not considered to be an appropriate approach because it does not follow a particular strategic direction and will not deliver the step-change in travel behaviour that is required to create better, more sustainable places that respond to the climate and ecological emergency and other challenges set out in this section.

Sustainable transport policy

Preferred approach

We recognise that all development has impacts on the transport network and therefore an up to date, overarching transport policy is required:

1. To receive planning permission, development proposals must be able to demonstrate that walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport are at least as, or more, competitive travel options than travelling by private car. The methodology will be based on journey time competitiveness to key employment and other destinations, and the requirements for developers and how it will be assessed will be set out in full in the sustainable transport policy. Work has already been undertaken about this and can be read in the Transport Appraisal supporting the Main Issues Report.
2. Travel Plans will be required to support the transition to sustainable transport. Any development considered likely to have significant trip-generating impacts (e.g. more than 50 house development or more than 1000m² retail, office, business or industrial development) should be supported by a Travel Plan that sets out:
 - a. Clear and measurable targets and objectives to deliver sustainable transport for that development.
 - b. What range of measures will be implemented to mitigate the impacts of development and to deliver sustainable transport.
 - c. What monitoring and reporting framework will be used to quantify the effectiveness of measures implemented, and when this will take place and be reported.
 - d. How the existing transport context has determined the measures considered most effective to deliver sustainable transport.
 - e. What mitigation will be implemented if such measures are found to be ineffective through monitoring, and how these will be monitored and reported.

We think a suite of innovative, effective options are available to developers to achieve sustainable transport, as set out in the Transport Appraisal supporting this Main Issues Report.

3. Developer contributions should be secured to support the transition to sustainable transport. Sites allocated in the Plan should ensure future development enables travel behaviour using the most sustainable transport possible and we think that developers should therefore contribute financially to the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure and services:
 - a. Where no specific intervention is required, a standard contribution per house or floorspace equivalent will be sought towards improving active travel and public transport infrastructure in the settlement or catchment area.
 - b. Where an active travel or public transport priority scheme is identified in the Plan, financial contributions towards their delivery will be sought from development proposals within the settlement, or defined catchment, on a per home or floorspace equivalent basis.

Alternative approach

The alternative option would be to continue with the current approach to transport, which relies on assessing individual planning applications against the relevant Highland-wide Local Development Plan policies. This is not considered to be an appropriate approach because it does not follow a particular strategic direction and will not deliver the step-change in travel behaviour that is required to create better, more sustainable places that respond to the climate and ecological emergency and other challenges set out in this section.

1.2.7 Identifying and safeguarding valued, local green space

All communities in the Plan area should be connected by and have access to high quality green and blue spaces. This will enable people to use natural, healthy environments and help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Green infrastructure

We call the natural features and areas of land valued because of their amenity, recreational and natural heritage value green infrastructure, and believe such features should be safeguarded.

This is a Main Issue because green infrastructure needs to be better recognised for its essential roles in mitigating and adapting to climate change and delivering social, environmental, health and placemaking benefits. To properly safeguard green infrastructure an up to date and comprehensive audit is required. The policy framework also needs to be brought in line with current thinking because the current approach was prepared in 2012 and national policy and legislation has since changed⁽⁴⁰⁾.

We have defined two types of green infrastructure we wish to protect and propose a different, better way of identifying and safeguarding each.

Greenspaces are the mapped areas in the Plan that have formal protection from development. They are the discrete and easily identifiable green and blue (waterside or waterbody) spaces that contribute to the character and setting of a place and provide amenity, biodiversity and recreation benefits as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation opportunities. Greenspaces may overlap with areas designated for other purposes such as Conservation Areas or environmentally protected places such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Green networks are different from greenspaces. They may serve one or more of the same functions as greenspaces but in a less formal or more strategic way. Green networks provide the physical, visual and habitat connections for greenspaces and therefore ensure accessibility for both wildlife and people. Development can be more flexibly accommodated within or adjacent to a green network as long as the network's connectivity and integrity is maintained and it is incorporated into a development as a positive landscape and design feature.

Identifying greenspace

The aIMFLDP includes maps for each main settlement that show valued green spaces. However, the methodology used to identify these spaces can be improved in the new Plan to produce a more comprehensive and accurate audit of these formally protected areas. Greenspaces are not shown in this Main Issues Report because we want to hear people's views on how the audit should be undertaken and invite suggestions for new greenspaces to be considered for safeguarding. The next version of the Plan for consultation will show the proposed areas of greenspace we think should be safeguarded as a result of the audit undertaken, this will include all of the existing safeguarded greenspace shown in the aIMFLDP.

40 The new approach proposed would result in Highland-wide Local Development Plan policies 74, 75 and 76 being superseded for the Plan area.

Identifying Valued, Local Greenspace

The [Highland Council's Audit of Greenspace](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/306/highland Greenspace_audit_settlements)⁽⁴¹⁾ was undertaken in 2010/11 and, alongside other areas identified in preparing the aIMFLDP, provided the basis for allocating greenspace. The 2010 Audit provides a starting point for IMFLDP2 to consider what greenspace should be safeguarded alongside the suggestions received through the recent Call for Sites consultation and other available sources (e.g. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland).

Preferred approach

We think that all potential greenspace being considered should be assessed consistently by using specific criteria, and that a greenspace should be identified when one or more of the following criteria is met:

Table 4 Greenspace assessment criteria.

Criterion	Explanation
Helps define the character of the local area .	It helps to make the local area unique and identifiable, this may be in combination with other features, like historic environment features or prominent local landmarks or landforms.
Improves the connectivity of the local area.	Paths and spaces in the area are linked together by the greenspace.
Provides amenity value .	It supports local biodiversity. It gives the local area an attractive setting and/or outlook from adjacent uses and routes.
Gives local people easy access to the natural environment to socialise and interact.	The area can be used by a range of people for informal social interaction.

41 https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/306/highland_Greenspace_audit_settlements

Provides services and/or facilities that can help mitigate or adapt to the effects of climate change .	Trees, drainage features, wetlands and floodplains are protected from development and provide means of mitigating climate change impacts and/or can help to absorb carbon.
Provides an area for sport or recreation .	Sports pitches, playing fields and golf courses facilitate access to greenspace for outdoor play and recreation.
Has potential for community food growing .	Area can be utilised for formal or informal community food growing, which may include the potential to deliver new allotments.

Alternative approach

We have also considered carrying forward the areas identified in the aIMFLDP unchanged. However, we think we can produce an objective assessment of greenspace in the Plan area and include consideration of new greenspace suggestions we received through the [Call for Sites](#)⁽⁴²⁾ process.

Safeguarding greenspace

When we have identified valued, local greenspace, we need to safeguard it using a suitable planning policy so that any planning application that proposes development of it, or would result in a reduction in its total area or quality, can be properly managed. We think that the draft policy approach below will be more comprehensive and simpler to apply than the existing policies⁽⁴³⁾.

42 <https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=38617f77829c4ee6a8a611e8a64d2fe1>

43 The areas that are identified in the adopted IMFLDP are safeguarded by HwLDP Policy 75: Open Space and HwLDP Policy 76: Playing Fields and Sports Pitches. The former protects high quality, accessible and fit for purpose open space from development and the latter safeguards these recreation assets from development. Policy 75 and 76 both allow certain exceptions where it may be acceptable to allow development on these areas (read the policies [Highland-wide Local Development Plan](#)). These HwLDP policies would be superseded by a Policy for the Plan area.

Safeguarding Greenspace Policy

Preferred approach

We think that all greenspace identified through the Greenspace audit should be safeguarded from development, including indirect impacts that could affect its quality. For sports and recreation sites only, there may be circumstances where development may be acceptable if:

- It can be demonstrated that development on a minor part of a sports or recreation greenspace would not affect its use and potential for sports and recreation; or
- It can be demonstrated that development on a sports or recreation greenspace would result in the provision of an equivalent or improved replacement facility that is at least as convenient to access and maintains or increases overall playing capacity of the particular activity in the settlement.

Alternative approach

We have also considered retaining our existing policies on this topic unchanged but we believe that a more comprehensive and consistent approach is needed.

Protecting Green Networks

We believe Green Networks should be identified, safeguarded and where possible enhanced because they make up the natural infrastructure that is important to the physical, visual and habitat connectivity of green spaces and therefore their accessibility to people and wildlife⁽⁴⁴⁾. Green Networks were not identified in the aIMFLDP, but will be identified in this Plan at its next stage. This work will involve identifying green networks in main settlements and showing them on the settlement maps so that those areas of green infrastructure that connect built-up areas to greenspace and to the surrounding countryside are protected and enhanced through developer requirements on allocated sites and in placemaking priorities identified for settlements. The approach will follow the broad principles and methodology set out in our [Green Networks Supplementary Guidance](#)⁽⁴⁵⁾.

44 HwLDP Policy 74 requires that green networks are protected and enhanced and it maps out broad areas where Green Networks should be identified in future. The [Green Networks Supplementary Guidance](#) sets out the further detail of this policy.

45 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2959/green_networks_final_supplementary_guidance.pdf

Green Networks Policy

We think it is important to include the following new Green Networks policy to ensure that development proposals are consistently assessed against this topic⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Preferred approach

We will identify Green Networks on the Plan's main settlement maps and safeguard the physical, visual and habitat connectivity of these Networks. A development proposal within or close to an identified Network will be assessed the extent to which it:

- affects the physical, visual and habitat connectivity (either adversely or positively) of that Network; and
- offers any mitigation of these effects.

By connectivity we mean the continuity and accessibility of that Network for people and wildlife whether those users wish to enter, pass through, travel along or derive public amenity value from that Network because of its visual continuity and accessibility.

Alternative approach

We have also considered retaining our existing policies on this topic unchanged but we believe that a more comprehensive and consistent approach is needed.

1.2.8 Placemaking

Across Highland in recent years, lifestyles and social attitudes have been changing, with more people wishing to live in a friendly and welcoming community which has quick and easy access to shops, work places, community facilities and local services, allowing them to spend less time commuting and more time with family and friends. These changing attitudes are resulting in suburban low density, edge of town living becoming less attractive.

46 This approach would be complemented by other HwLDP policies, such as Policy 52: Principle of Development in Woodland and Policy 51: Trees and Development, which would remain part of the development plan's suite of policies that a proposal would be assessed against. Appendix 2 of the Green Networks Supplementary Guidance sets out how the green network and coastal and landward trails will be identified and delivered. It is proposed that this would be updated and replicated in IMFLDP2.

The Council approach and that of most large housebuilders and commercial developers hasn't responded to these evolving trends. Instead, the development industry has continued building stand-alone housing schemes which poorly connect with each other and the wider areas. Concurrently, shopping, business districts and leisure areas have been built on their own out-of-town sites, distinct from residential areas thereby requiring users to drive to access them. This in turn has led to an increase in traffic which has resulted in traffic congestion around our city and towns and has been detrimental to our air quality and individuals health.

A number of policies already exist in the Council current LDPs which were designed to combat these issues, but they are now dated, piecemeal and poorly understood by the public, the development industry and decision makers, resulting in them being applied in an inconsistent manner.

Figure 1.4 Placemaking principles



Moving forward, our ambition is the creation of sustainable, good quality, well designed and connected urban communities. To achieve this, we believe we need one clear policy outlining our commitment to quality design, 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.

1 Vision, Outcomes and Main Issues | Lèirsinn, Builean agus Prìomh Chùisean

In order to do this, we need to embed the fundamentals of placemaking into every stage of the design, planning and development process and will do so through the use of various "Design Tools". Individual Design Tools are designed to be used independently at different stages of the development process, but should come together to attain a single cohesive and comprehensive scheme. The Design Tools are split between the initial design phase and the regulation process shown in Table 5 'Placemaking design tools'.

Table 5 Placemaking design tools

Initial Design Tools to guide and shape the development from the outset:	
Development Briefs.	Provides clarity and guidance on the development requirements and principles for a specific site.
Masterplans.	Provide a clear and detailed direction for development, considering the relationship between uses, buildings, open spaces, and all transport routes, through the use of detailed maps and plans.
Charrette.	An intensive planning session where citizens, designers and collaborate work together to prepare a single vision for a site/development.
Design Review Panel.	Impartial and multi-disciplinary, expert review panel designed to provide constructive feedback at the pre-application stage of the planning process.
Pre-application Advice ⁽¹⁾ .	Council provided advice and information on the issues which require consideration as part of the planning application process.
Scheme Design Codes.	Used to set out a clear "code" for specific element of a design (e.g street layout). A valuable tool to deliver and achieve specific design principles established earlier in the development process, by making clear what can and can't be done.
Local Place Plans.	A plan developed by the community which gives them the opportunity to develop proposals for the development and use of land in the place where they live.
Placemaking Audit.	New Highland Council tool to be trialed through the MIR for developers and Council to use to guide, inform and assess new developments.
Regulation Process Tools to describe, illustrate and support the development during assessment:	

Design and Access Statements ⁽¹⁾ .	Design and Access Statements must be submitted to accompany all planning applications for permission for Major or National developments as defined for Development Management purposes.
Design Statements ⁽¹⁾ .	Design Statements must be submitted for those applications defined as "local developments" for Development Management purposes within the following areas; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Areas. • National Scenic Areas. • Site of a Scheduled Monument. • Curtilage of a Category A Listed Building. • Historic Garden/Designed Landscape.

1. These tools are statutorily required for various types of development.

Each tool has a different purpose, value and outcome and very few schemes will require every Design Tool to be used. However, each tool is designed to involve a creative and collaborative process which engages all interested parties. The aim and function of each is to create and deliver sustainable, distinctive and connected developments and wider communities, which respects and enhances the site, wider location and natural resources. Details of each Design Tool is contained in Appendix 1: 'Glossary | Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair' and further information can be found within numerous [Planning Advice Notes and Guidance available on-line](#)⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Placemaking Policy

Preferred approach

All development proposals are expected to follow a design-led approach to achieve sustainable, high quality placemaking and be sited, designed and laid out to create successful, healthy places that make a positive contribution to the architectural and visual quality in which they area located and encourage good physical and mental health, whilst helping to reduce health inequalities, improve people's wellbeing, safeguard the environment and support economic development.

All applications should include a written statement outlining which Design Tool(s) have been utilised, how the scheme evolved and the changes adopted as a result of using the Design Tool. Furthermore, for development proposals of 4 or more dwellings and major scale non

47 <https://www.gov.scot/collections/planning-advice-notes-pans/>

housing applications developers must submit a completed Placemaking Audit based to the criteria outlined in Appendix 2: 'Placemaking Audit | Eàrr-ràdh 2: Sgrùdadh Dèanamh Àiteachan'. Conformity will all the "Essential" criteria must be demonstrated as part of the application submission and adequate demonstration of also meeting the Audit's "Desirable" criteria will classify the proposal as having a net positive effect, conformity with this policy.

Alternative approaches

- We could continue to apply our existing policies on this subject but they are dated, piecemeal, not easily understood by the development industry and decision makers, and applied in an inconsistent manner.
- We could have fewer "Design Tools".
- We could apply the requirements of the Placemaking Audit to fewer or more types/scales of development.
- We could make fewer or more criteria outlined in the Placemaking Audit "Essential" or "Desirable".

1.2.9 Meeting the needs of an ageing population

In common with the rest of Scotland, the Plan area's population profile is ageing; in the near future, a higher proportion of the total population will be in the older age groups. In particular, within Highland, there will be a higher than national average increase in those 75 or over as the "baby boom" generation moves through their 70s and because of increased life expectancy the need for care and specialist housing will increase. Based on current projections it is expected that by 2035 the older population (75 and over) in Highland will have increased by 49% since 2019. Although many people will be able to live at home for longer there will be an increasing need for suitable, accessible accommodation and associated support services. A significant proportion of the elderly population is likely to live alone, bringing a particular set of challenges in terms of housing and care.

There is clearly a need to address the issues associated with an ageing population in terms of housing needs. A partnership approach will be required to deliver a vision to support accommodation options that will allow people to stay in their own homes or communities for as long as possible and there is a role for the Local Development Plan to play in this.

Initial discussions have been held internally in the Council, however, there is a need for wider cross-Council and Community Planning partner collaboration to determine what measures will be required to address the issues. There are already examples of innovative models of accommodation across Highland however their capacity is much less than current need. There is also a need for

the Council to lobby the Scottish Government to update the Housing for Varying Needs guidance. It is out of date in relation to developments in inclusive design, design for dementia and autism, as well as for disabled people using larger wheelchairs. It assumes wheelchair users and those who use mobility aids need "specialist housing" with integral support rather than mainstream housing. Again this is out of date with the housing requirements and aspirations of the majority of wheelchair users. Nationally there is a call for the Scottish Government to give due consideration of the potential to develop a single cross tenure statutory design standard that provides for an enhanced space standard.

The affordable housing section of the Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance already requires that between 15% and 25% of the 25% affordable housing requirement should be "wheelchair liveable", which means a prescribed series of building design changes to make it easier for an elderly and/or disabled householder to use and move around the accommodation. It is acknowledged that the costs of developing this kind of housing is higher. Therefore it is suggested that a more proactive approach is needed to ensure that public funding is increased and better matched to the need which is forecast.

At present there is no onus on private developers to provide "wheelchair liveable" housing. However, it is considered that developers of private housing could provide a broader range of open market priced accommodation that is flexible to evolving householder requirements. In particular, there is potential for more innovative higher density housing to provide suitable accommodation. This can also help achieve more liveable neighbourhoods which are more socially inclusive and where elderly people will feel less isolated. Achieving this will require the efforts of our community planning partners and housing providers.

Meeting the needs of an ageing population

Preferred approaches

We believe that all of the following complementary measures are required.

- The Council, affordable housing providers, and other stakeholders should lobby the Scottish Government for increased funding to ensure that 25% of all new build, affordable housing units delivered across the Plan area are built to a "wheelchair liveable standard" - i.e. meet both the basic and desirable criteria as specified in the [Housing for Varying Needs Guidance](#) ⁽⁴⁸⁾.

48 https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20131205120926uo_/http://www.archive2.official-documents.co.uk/document/deps/cs/HousingOutput/content/index.html

- Private developers of large (50 or more dwellings) planning applications, will be required to provide 5% of the dwellings to be built to a "wheelchair liveable standard" - i.e. to meet both the basic and desirable criteria as specified in the Housing for Varying Needs guidance. This requirement is to be additional to the affordable housing provision required as part of the application. However, to ensure that sites remain viable, the 5% accommodation can be offered at its open market price/rental.
- The Plan could identify sites suitable for accommodation for the elderly and disabled, for example level sites in close proximity to services, facilities and public transport.

Alternative approach

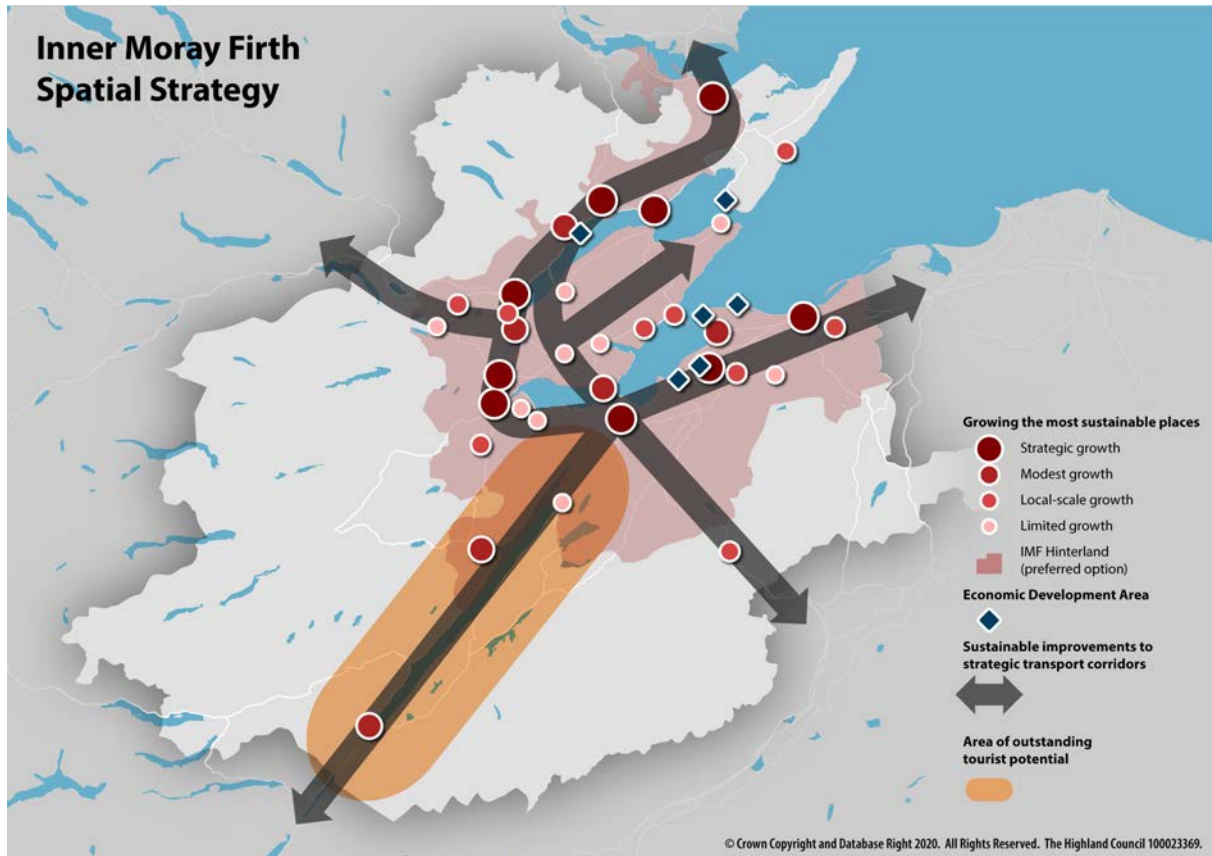
Instead, we could do the following.

- Continue to accept a lower standard of wheelchair accessibility than that desirable, within the majority of new affordable housing.
- Rely on the development industry to deliver the required type and mix of homes in appropriate locations.

2 Spatial Strategy | Ro-innleachd Spàsail

Map 2.1 'Spatial strategy' is a visual summary of our preferred approaches to the 9 Main Issues that we have identified in this Report. It only includes those approaches which have a spatial or geographic dimension.

Map 2.1 Spatial strategy



One significant change from our current policy approach is a suggested shift away from specifically identified growth corridors for land between Inverness and Nairn, and Easter Ross. Instead, we are proposing a finer grained strategy based on the Plan's settlement hierarchy. This hierarchy is based upon optimising environmental sustainability and economic viability in growth location selection. The suggested hierarchy is tabulated and justified, and the expected scale of growth envisaged within each tier of settlement is explained in 1.2.3 'Growing the most sustainable places'. We believe this approach will most successfully address the Plan's twin primary aims of addressing issues raised in 1.2.1 'Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency' and 1.2.2 'Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy'..

Outwith the main, identified settlements, our Spatial Strategy is to encourage economic development at specifically identified Economic Development Areas, which have a locational imperative to be there such as the established ports at Whiteness and Nigg. Similarly, the Loch Ness corridor is an established tourism destination where the benefits of tourists' spend and

2 Spatial Strategy | Ro-innleachd Spàsail

disbenefits of tourists' environmental impact can better be managed to increase and spread economic benefit but also to encourage more sustainable tourism particularly in terms of tourists' mode of travel.

The Spatial Strategy graphic depicts the Plan's suggested:

- Settlement Hierarchy;
- Loch Ness Sustainable Tourism Corridor;
- Economic Development Areas;
- Hinterland Boundary; and,
- Spatial Priorities highlighted within the Council's draft Regional Spatial Strategy.

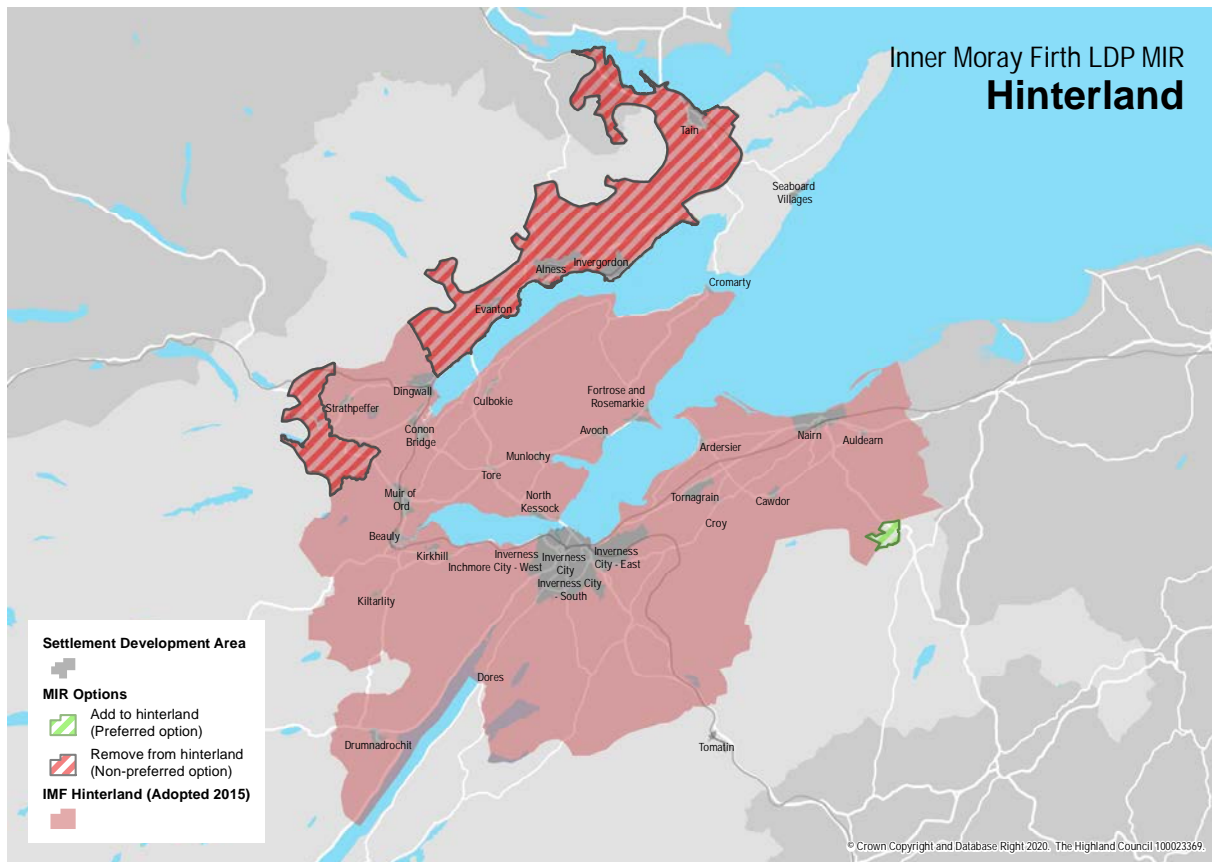
Housing in the Countryside - The Hinterland Boundary

Outwith the main, identified settlements, our Spatial Strategy for housing is better to manage pressure for new building because of its adverse environmental and economic effects. Specifically, uncontrolled, sporadic housing development in the open countryside closest to the major employment settlements, other things being equal:

- increases car-based trips to work and most other activities resulting in higher carbon and other harmful emissions than otherwise need occur;
- suburbanises the open (or dispersed pattern of settlement) landscape character of the existing countryside; and,
- increases the cost of public (and private) service provision such as a wired internet connection, a postal service, a private parcel delivery, a water main connection, waste collection, a public sewer connection, a mobile library van service, a school transport service.

Therefore, we believe that new development in the open countryside should be controlled to favour those with good reason to be there. Housing in connection with a business already in a countryside area or a new enterprise particularly suited to a rural area are existing, sensible exceptions. This includes farmers, crofters and others with a genuine, frequent need to manage their rural land use activity but also managers of kennels, catteries and other "bad neighbour" uses that are not suited to a traditional industrial estate.

Map 2.2 Hinterland



To allow some flexibility given that Highland has a long tradition of dispersed parish based settlement and that many indigenous people have been born and raised in rural areas, the Plan identifies a list of Growing Settlements where proportionate growth can occur without a land or business management justification. Similarly, there is no management justification required within existing housing groups.

This Plan cannot change the planning policy that applies within the Hinterland only the boundary that determines where that policy is applied. Presently, we are reviewing the detail of the policy itself including ways of increasing flexibility such as widening the definition of a housing group. This review is subject to a public consultation process separate from this Plan.

Hinterland Boundary

Preferred approach

Following an analysis of recent house completion data, demographic trends, and likely changes in future travel to work patterns combined with this Plan's aim of reducing unnecessary car borne travel, we believe that the geographic area of open countryside currently identified as

the Hinterland is still fit for purpose. We are suggesting only one minor expansion to the Hinterland boundary at Belivat, Nairnshire, where sporadic development has occurred causing cumulative adverse environmental and servicing effects.

Alternative approaches

[Recent house completion data](#)⁽⁴⁹⁾ suggests that other expansions to the Hinterland boundary may be appropriate. There has been sporadic development outwith Tomatin and the dualling of the rest of the A9 and a new, safer village junction may increase that pressure. Similarly, the relatively high proportion of total house completions that have occurred outwith settlements in Nairnshire, East Ross and the small West Ross portion of the Plan may justify expansions to the boundary.

Conversely, some Highland Councillors have suggested on behalf of some of their constituents that the Hinterland boundary be contracted in order to actively promote housing development in the countryside. The justification for such an approach is varied. Such development does support the small scale local construction industry, can support self build housing, can provide affordable house plots where related family land is available, and dispersed single house development tends to prompt fewer objections than larger scale proposals concentrated within settlements because of the latter's perceived or actual adverse impact on the residential amenity of immediate neighbours. The suggested contractions are separately to draw in the Hinterland boundary to the Cromarty Firth Bridge to exclude Easter Ross and/or to draw it in to the Inverness side of Contin and Marybank. These suggested contractions are not preferred because of the cumulative adverse impacts it would have on the climate, the cost and efficiency of public service provision, and on the local landscape. On a more technical point, the Hinterland was originally born out of a desire to protect the open countryside within a 20 minute drive time around major work centres including Invergordon and Alness so the removal of East Ross would undermine the very principle of this approach and leave a detached portion of the Hinterland area around Dornoch, which is outwith this Plan area.

49 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/205/planning_-_policies_advice_and_service_levels/556/housing_land_information

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

For each settlement we have outlined the Key Issues and Placemaking Priorities that we think are important for guiding what development can happen in these places. For the main settlements, we have also identified specific development sites and given an initial indication of what we think of them. These development sites have come from 3 sources:

1. land⁽⁵⁰⁾ suggested by landowners, developers and communities through the Plan's initial "[Call for Sites](#)"⁽⁵¹⁾⁽⁵²⁾;
2. undeveloped or only partly developed sites allocated within the existing [aIMFLDP](#)⁽⁵³⁾; and,
3. larger⁽⁵⁰⁾ sites with an extant planning permission that haven't already been included from source 1 or 2.

Each development site option has been given an initial, colour coded, Council preference of "preferred" (green), "alternative" (amber) or "non-preferred" (red). This preference is based on a [sustainability appraisal](#)⁽⁵⁴⁾ consideration of each site/proposal which includes input from a variety of stakeholders including public service providers. Please note that the Council's intention is to confirm for allocation in the next Proposed Plan, only those sites shown as "preferred" in this document. An "alternative" site will only be considered for confirmation where it can be evidenced, in response to this Main Issues Report, that it is clearly better in sustainability appraisal terms than at least one equivalent "preferred" site in that locality. The following explains our approach to site preferences.

Preferred Sites

- Sites that are the most suitable in sustainability appraisal terms, i.e. they are the most environmentally sustainable and most economically viable to develop for both the public and private sector especially in terms of infrastructure provision and other mitigation necessary to deliver them.
- Larger (10 or more dwelling units and non housing equivalent) fully committed sites that are under construction as of summer 2020.

50 We have not included some sites because we think they are of too small a scale to be significant to the future of a main settlement (as defined in this document) or they are proposals and/or in locations that are clearly, in our view, environmentally unsustainable.

51 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/

52 [inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3)

53 https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15008/adopted_inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan

54 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/202/inner_moray_firth_local_development_plan/3

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Alternative Sites

Sites that are reasonable in sustainability appraisal terms but are not required in quantitative terms - i.e. if they were included then the capacity of housing component development sites confirmed in the Plan would be well in excess of the Plan's Housing Supply Target or would represent over-provision within the non housing land supply, e.g. would be likely to displace economic activity from one Plan area location to another rather than increase overall economic activity.

Non-Preferred Sites

Sites that are the least suitable in sustainability appraisal terms, i.e. they are the least environmentally sustainable and/or the least economically viable to develop for both the public and private sector especially in terms of infrastructure provision and other mitigation necessary to deliver them.

3.1 Alness | Alanais

Alness is a key settlement within Easter Ross. It has an attractive setting, situated on the northern shore of the Cromarty Firth and the River Averon runs through the town. A quarry and forestry border the northern boundary of the town.

The town is a key service and employment centre with a rich diversity of businesses, services and shops. It has a thriving town centre with quality streetscape and planting and above average level of retail occupancy and diversity and in 2018 was awarded "Great British High Street" Scottish Champion Award Winner.

Business and industrial estates provide significant employment for the area. There has been some major investment in the town in recent years, a number of new businesses premises have opened and a replacement secondary school campus is due to be completed in 2020. There are three primary schools, Obsdale Primary, Bridgend Primary and Coulhill Primary, situated in the east, centre and west of the town respectively.

Alness also benefits from good transport links with easy access on to the A9 and both train and bus links heading north and to Inverness.

As a key service and employment centre with a vibrant town centre that is in close proximity to Inverness and has good transport links there is likely to be demand for continued housing and employment growth in Alness. As such Alness is considered as a strategic main settlement where significant housing, business, industrial and retail growth will continue to be supported.

Housing growth is focussed on the eastern margins of the town, along with substantial allocations to the north and the south. There is steady demand for housing in Alness East, however active travel links to the town are poor, with missing footpaths and narrow roads. For Alness East to progress in the longer term, it is very likely that a new/upgraded junction will be required onto the A9. The existing junction at Rosskeen is not suitable for large amounts of additional traffic.

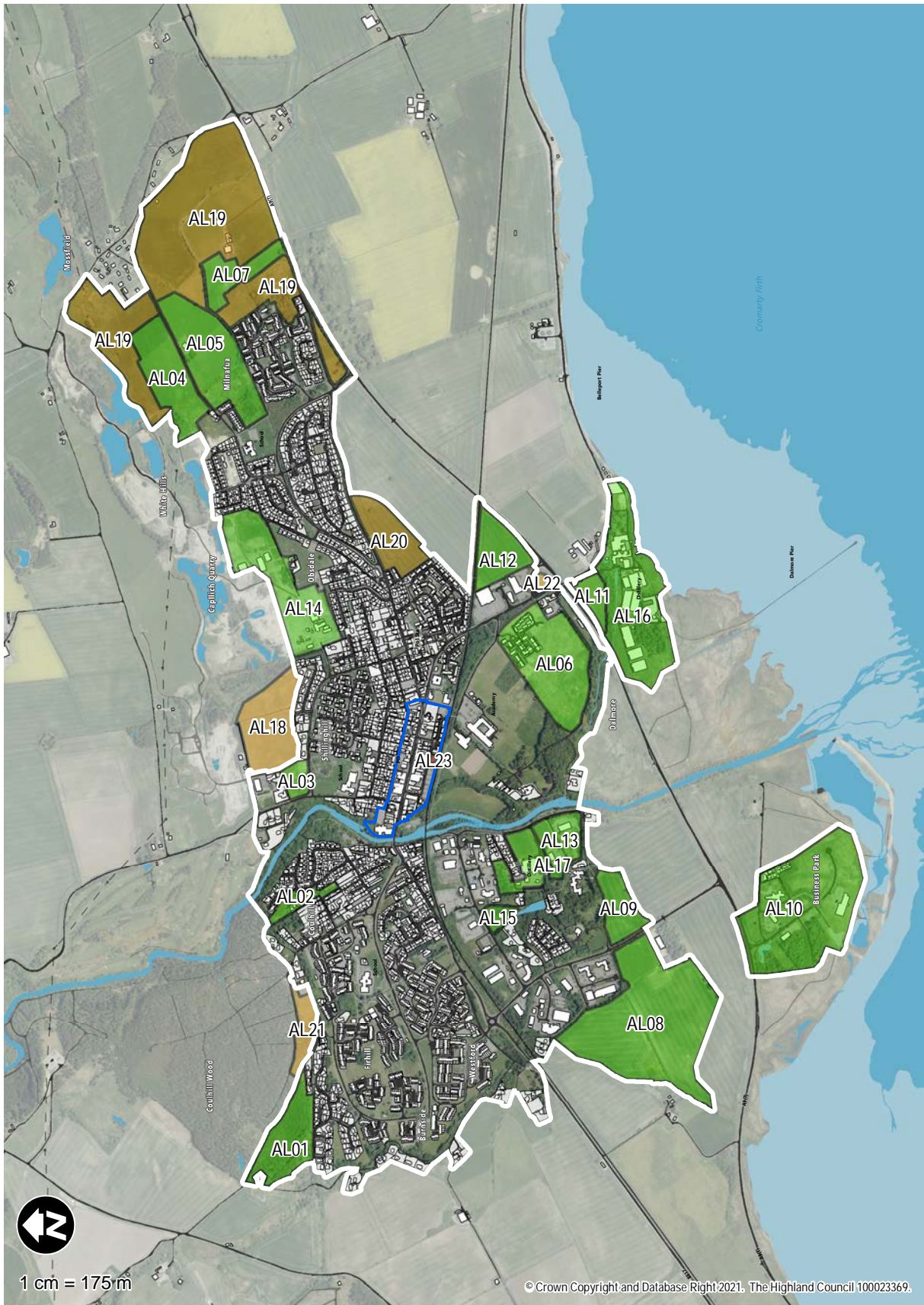
Business and industrial development is directed to the south of the railway.

Placemaking Priorities

- Preserve attractive setting of Alness.
- Protect and enhance the vibrant town centre.
- Increase capacity in local primary schools.
- Improve and expand on active travel links.
- Maintain high quality rural setting and quality green spaces.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.1 Alness



Sites

Preferred Sites

AL01

Name: Darroch Brae West

Use(s): Housing

AL02

Name: Willowbank Park

Use(s): Housing

AL03

Name: Crosshills - Phase 1

Use(s): Housing

AL04

Name: Whitehills

Use(s): Housing

AL05

Name: Milnafua Farm

Use(s): Housing

AL06

Name: Dalmore

Use(s): Housing

AL07

Name: Achnagarron Farm

Use(s): Community

AL08

Name: West and South of Dail nan Roca

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business/Commercial)

AL09

Name: South of Teaninich Wood

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business/Tourism)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

AL10	
Name: Alness Point	Use(s): Mixed Use (Business/Industry)
AL11	
Name: Field to North West of Dalmore Distillery	Use(s): Mixed Use (Business/Industry)
AL12	
Name: Invergordon Road East	Use(s): Retail
AL13	
Name: Averon Way	Use(s): Business
AL14	
Name: Caplich Quarry	Use(s): Industry
AL15	
Name: Alness Industrial Estate	Use(s): Industry
AL16	
Name: Dalmore Distillery	Use(s): Industry
AL17	
Name: Teaninich Distillery	Use(s): Industry

There are a number of housing sites in Alness which are actively being developed - AL04 Whitehills, AL06 Dalmore and AL02 Willowbank Park. There are also a number of other sites which have been suggested are suitable for housing. Sites identified at Darroch Brae West (AL01), Crosshills Phase 1 (AL03) and Milnafua Farm (AL05) are considered to be the most suitable and most likely to be developed. AL10 Alness Point has six sites remaining available for development. It is being preferred for business and industrial uses but not for a hotel use as suggested through the Call for Sites.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

AL15 Alness Industrial Estate was suggested through the Call for Sites to be used for housing. This is not considered appropriate at this location and would be preferable to continue to be available for industrial uses.

Alternative Sites

AL18

Name: Crosshills

Use(s): Housing

AL19

Name: Alness East

Use(s): Housing

AL20

Name: Obsdale Road

Use(s): Housing

AL21

Name: Darroch Brae East

Use(s): Housing

AL22

Name: Land South of Lidl at B817

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business/Retail)

The remaining land at Crosshills (AL18) may be suitable for longer term housing requirements and phase 1 could be developed without affecting the remainder of the site. AL19 Alness East is a large expansion area for the town. The sections shown as amber are considered to be the areas which are more likely to be developed longer term.

Non-Preferred Sites

AL23

Name: Academy Lane

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Academy Lane is too small to allocate but it could remain as grey land within the Settlement boundary and would be suitable for infill development.

3.2 Ardersier | Àird nan Saor

With a population of just over 1,200 people, Ardersier is a reasonably large village which benefits from a range of local facilities including a primary school, several shops, a pharmacy and large children's play park. Despite its relatively close proximity to both Nairn (approximately 9 kilometres) and Inverness (15 kilometres) public transport options are limited.

As a former fishing village, Ardersier is located on the southern coast of the Inner Moray Firth and is situated between the shoreline and a steep raised beach. Much of the available development land within the settlement is impacted by flood risk and/or a high water table.

Fort George, a large 18th-century fortress, is located just over a mile to the north with its only access being taken through the village. It is one of the most imposing and well known military barracks in the UK and provides both an ongoing military function and a well established tourist attraction. Its proximity to Ardersier has helped create and sustain services and facilities over and above many other similar sized villages. However, with the announcement by the MoD of the closure of Fort George as a military base, securing a suitable future use will be important to the future of Ardersier.

Planning permission was granted in December 2019 for 117 homes to the south of the village. It is expected that development there will help address the majority of housing need in the area for many years to come.

Placemaking Priorities

- Improve transport connections, including for non-motorised users, with key employment destinations, particularly Inverness Airport, Nairn and Inverness. This will include seeking developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of the A96 Coastal Trail.
- Encourage the sensitive renovation and redevelopment of vacant and derelict sites within the village.
- Improve traffic management on the High Street. This should include measures which better manage the implications of traffic generated by new development in the area (particularly related to any conversion of Fort George), assist with the servicing of properties and for people to safely cross the public roads on required desire lines.

Map 3.2 Ardersier



Sites

Preferred Sites

AR01

Name: South of Nairn Road

Use(s): Housing

AR02

Name: West of Station Road

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

Land south of Nairn Road is preferred as it has permission for 117 new homes and is currently being built out. The land west of Station Road is also supported because it is a centrally located, brownfield site.

Alternative Sites

AR03

Name: Industrial Estate Expansion

Use(s): Industry

Despite the need for industrial land in the area, we are considering removing the site as it has not been actively promoted by a developer or landowner since its allocation in the plan and therefore its availability is uncertain.

Non-Preferred Sites

AR04

Name: Milton of Connage Farm

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

AR05

Name: South of Cromal Terrace

Use(s): Mixed use (Housing, Community)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

AR06

Name: Land North of Village

Use(s): Mixed Use (Tourism, Business)

Land at Milton of Connage Farm is non-preferred as it appears to have realised its full business potential on alternative land and expansion has not been sought by the landowner, tenant or a developer. We are therefore uncertain about its availability and development potential. The two existing allocations at the north of the village have not been preferred as the sites are at risk of coastal flooding.

3.3 Auldearn | Allt Èireann

The small village of Auldearn is located about 3 km to the east of Nairn and lies on undulating land which influences the form and setting of the settlement. Facilities and services are limited to a small shop/post office, a hotel/pub and a primary school. Since the turn of the millennium, there has been a steady delivery of nearly 100 new homes which equates to an average of 5 per year.

The 175 pupil capacity primary school is located in the centre of the village and serves not just Auldearn but a large rural catchment. The School Roll Forecast shows a 2 classroom extension will be required to accommodate the steady increase in pupils projected to attend over the next ten years.

The village lies in and around the site of the 1645 Battle of Auldearn and this has been a defining factor in the extent to which the settlement has developed over recent times.

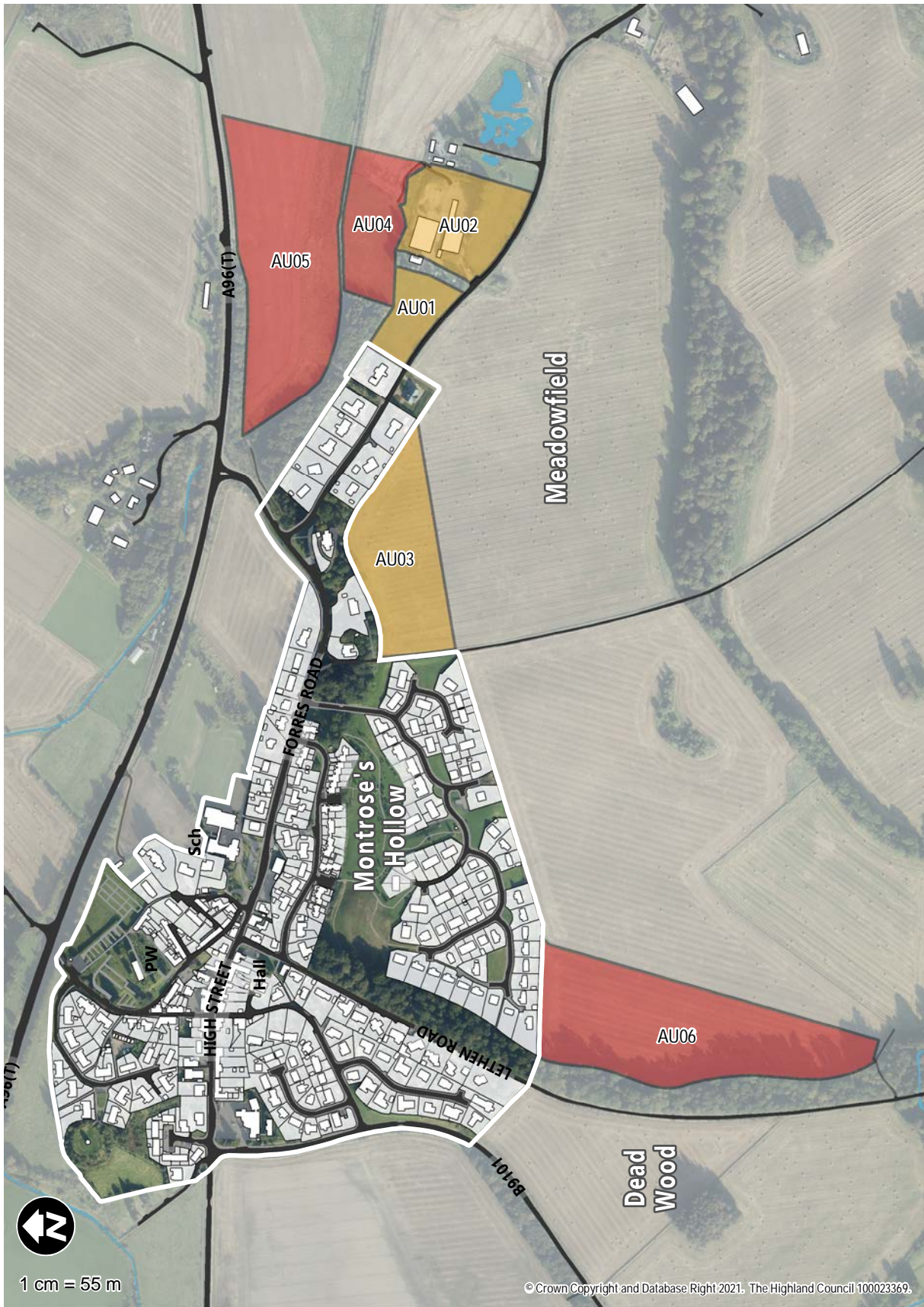
The A96 dualling project includes a bypass of Nairn which incorporates a high capacity grade separation junction to the north of Auldearn. This may help support further small scale allocations to be delivered over the long term.

Placemaking Priorities

- Consolidate Auldearn with any new development helping to round off rather than expand in any one direction.
- Ensure a coordinated approach to development with contributions towards the active travel network and areas of open space.
- Avoid any further uncoordinated ribbon development along Moyness Road.
- Safeguard the 1645 Battle of Auldearn battlefield from development.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.3 Auldearn



Sites

Alternative Sites

AU01

Name: Meadowfield

Use(s): Housing

AU02

Name: Meadowfield Steadings

Use(s): Housing

AU03

Name: East of Montrose Avenue

Use(s): Housing

The land east of Montrose Avenue offers possibly the best site option and most logical expansion of Auldearn. However, to ensure it is well connected to the rest of the village we want the applicant to demonstrate that suitable access and connections can be delivered. We would expect that this should avoid a convoluted access from Moyness Road.

Whilst there may be capacity for further housing development on the northern side of Moyness Road, the applicant has not addressed issues raised in the past relating to surface water drainage, upgrading of transport infrastructure and appropriate site layout. A masterplanned approach will be needed to address these issues and create a coordinated approach.

Non-Preferred Sites

AU04

Name: Meadowfield North

Use(s): Housing

AU05

Name: South of A96

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

AU06

Name: Lethen Road

Use(s): Housing

The sites north of Meadowfield are non preferred as much of it is prime agricultural land, could have impacts on the setting of Auldearn and require significant transport infrastructure. Land at Lethen Road is non preferred as it is wholly within the Battle of Auldearn battlefield. The site would also require a major transport network upgrade which is likely to make it unviable.

3.4 Avoch | Abhach

Avoch's origins as a fishing village with an agricultural hinterland continue to shape its form and function. With just over 1,000 residents, Avoch's more recent expansion has been because of its attractive coastal location and views which have fueled commuter and holiday accommodation demand. Water and sewerage capacity is plentiful and the settlement has a range of commercial and community facilities.

However, future expansion potential is limited by a range of physical, environmental and service capacity constraints. Coastal and fluvial flood risks and steep hill slopes limit where new building could and should happen. The local primary school is already over capacity. The central conservation area and the wooded margins of the village also constrain growth. Perhaps most importantly, Avoch is served by a spine road (the A832) which has capacity and safety issues and infrequent public transport options. Given this, we do not think it would be advisable to promote significant commuter/holiday accommodation growth in this settlement.

Instead, we believe that existing planning permissions and land allocations should be completed but no new land identified for development.

Placemaking Priorities

- To limit new development to existing planning permissions and land allocations.
- To add extra capacity at the primary school.
- To improve linkages between new development west of the village and village centre facilities.
- To protect the character of Avoch's central conservation area and its wooded margins.
- To seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of an active travel link between Munlochy and Avoch.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.4 Avoch



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Sites

Preferred Sites

AV01

Name: Rosehaugh East Drive (South)

Use(s): Housing

AV02

Name: Memorial Field

Use(s): Housing

AV03

Name: Muiralehouse

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business)

AV04

Name: Harbour

Use(s): Business

AV05

Name: South of Ormonde Terrace

Use(s): Industry

The preferred sites benefit from longstanding, in principle, support for development. The two business/industry sites have a locational imperative to be where they are proposed - i.e. to expand adjacent to where related facilities already exist. Land at Muiralehouse is the least constrained land that lies closest to the village's community and commercial facilities. Sites AV01 and AV02 have current developer interest and have progressed to planning applications.

Non-Preferred Sites

AV06

Name: Cemetery Hill

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

AV07

Name: Rosehaugh East Drive (North)

Use(s): Housing

AV08

Name: East of Knockmuir

Use(s): Housing

AV09

Name: Muiralehouse (South)

Use(s): Mixed Use

There is no quantitative reason to earmark new housing sites in Avoch. Moreover the new sites suggested as Cemetery Hill and East of Knockmuir are elevated, exposed, accessed via single track roads with poor alignment, and unlikely to encourage active travel to the village's community and commercial facilities. The suggested site at Rosehaugh East Drive is less constrained but has woodland and access constraints and is marginally further from village facilities than site AV01.

3.5 Beaully | A' Mhanachainn

Beaully is an important local facilities centre for a wider rural hinterland and a tourist destination. It lies approximately 19km west of Inverness and houses around 1,500 people. Enclosed between the railway line and the River Beaully, its settlement form is compact and centred around an impressive "Village Square" Conservation Area which is characterised by substantial stonebuilt properties in tree lined streets. It is also a popular commuter town for those working in Inverness and Ross-shire and has the sustainable travel advantage of a rail halt. These factors and the abundance of reasonably flat and reasonably well drained land close to central facilities make it an ideal location for growth.

However, there are physical, environmental and service capacity constraints that should be respected. The rising slopes and wooded margins of the adjoining countryside combined with the River Beaully and its flood plain and high water table to the east and railway to the south and west limit where that growth could and should be supported. The Village Square and the central road network were not designed for a high level of vehicle traffic. Similarly the primary school accommodation is outdated.

Taking account of these development factors we believe that this Plan should support the continued expansion of Beaully but in a compact form and hand in hand with improvement to local facilities notably extension of the Priory Way loop road that will relieve pressure on the narrowest central road network and new accommodation at or close to the primary school.

The historic village square is key to Beaully's character and is designated as a Conservation Area. The Council will seek to protect, preserve or enhance its special architectural and historic interest. The Council may undertake a Conservation Area Management Plan which will consider key challenges and opportunities facing the conservation area, and provide guidance on the appropriate siting, scale, massing and materials for new development and for the alteration, extension and refurbishment of buildings throughout Beaully Conservation Area.

Placemaking Priorities

- To expand the town respecting the physical limits of the railway line and River Beaully flood plain.
- To complete a peripheral loop road to ease issues created by the outdated central road network.
- To provide land to encourage a more self contained community with local employment opportunities, more housing specifically adapted for the elderly, and better community facilities.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

- To protect and enhance the town's historic and vibrant centre.
- To seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of an active travel link between Beaully and Kirkhill.

Map 3.5 Beauly



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

BE01

Name: Beauly North

Use(s): Housing

BE02

Name: East Wellhouse

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business and/or Residential Institution Non-residential Institution)

BE03

Name: North East of Fire Station

Use(s): Mixed Use (Retail, Business, Tourism)

BE04

Name: South of Rail Line

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Rail Halt Expansion)

BE05

Name: Allotments

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Housing Adapted for the Ageing Population)

BE06

Name: Primary School and Playing Fields

Use(s): Community (Primary School and Playing Fields)

The preferred sites will maintain the compact settlement pattern of Beauly and respects its constraints. Other things being equal, compact mixed use development will encourage active travel because there will be the opportunity to walk or cycle to local employment and local facilities. Business development is directed as close as possible to the town centre to bolster footfall and to the rail station where certain uses may gain a competitive advantage from that connected location.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

The allotments at Fraser Street provide a community growing space but this could be provided elsewhere in Beaully. At least part of the allotments site, being flat and central to amenities, could be suited to housing accommodation specifically adapted for the elderly whether that is private flatted or institutional accommodation.

Alternative Sites

BE07

Name: North East of Croyard Road

Use(s): Housing

BE08

Name: West of Cnoc na Rath

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community - Education)

Sites BE07 and BE08 are allocated in the existing approved development plan but have not come forward for development because of land ownership reasons. Although they are otherwise suitable for development they may also be held back by infrastructure costs such as the need to safeguard land for presently unprogrammed high school investment and to progress the Priory Way loop road. Given these viability issues and the need only to allocate sufficient, viable housing land we are presently not convinced that the new Plan should include these sites.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

3.6 Cawdor | Caladair

Cawdor is located approximately 8km south-west of Nairn on the B9090. The village is closely associated with Cawdor Castle and the majority of the estate buildings date back to the 18th century and lie within a Conservation Area.

The strategic expansion of Cawdor was first identified, along with other small settlements such as Croy, in the A96 Corridor Masterplan in 2006. This was part of a wider aspiration to encourage large scale mixed use growth along the A96. The levels of growth anticipated in the Masterplan have not been realised and development which has been delivered is located in the larger settlements.

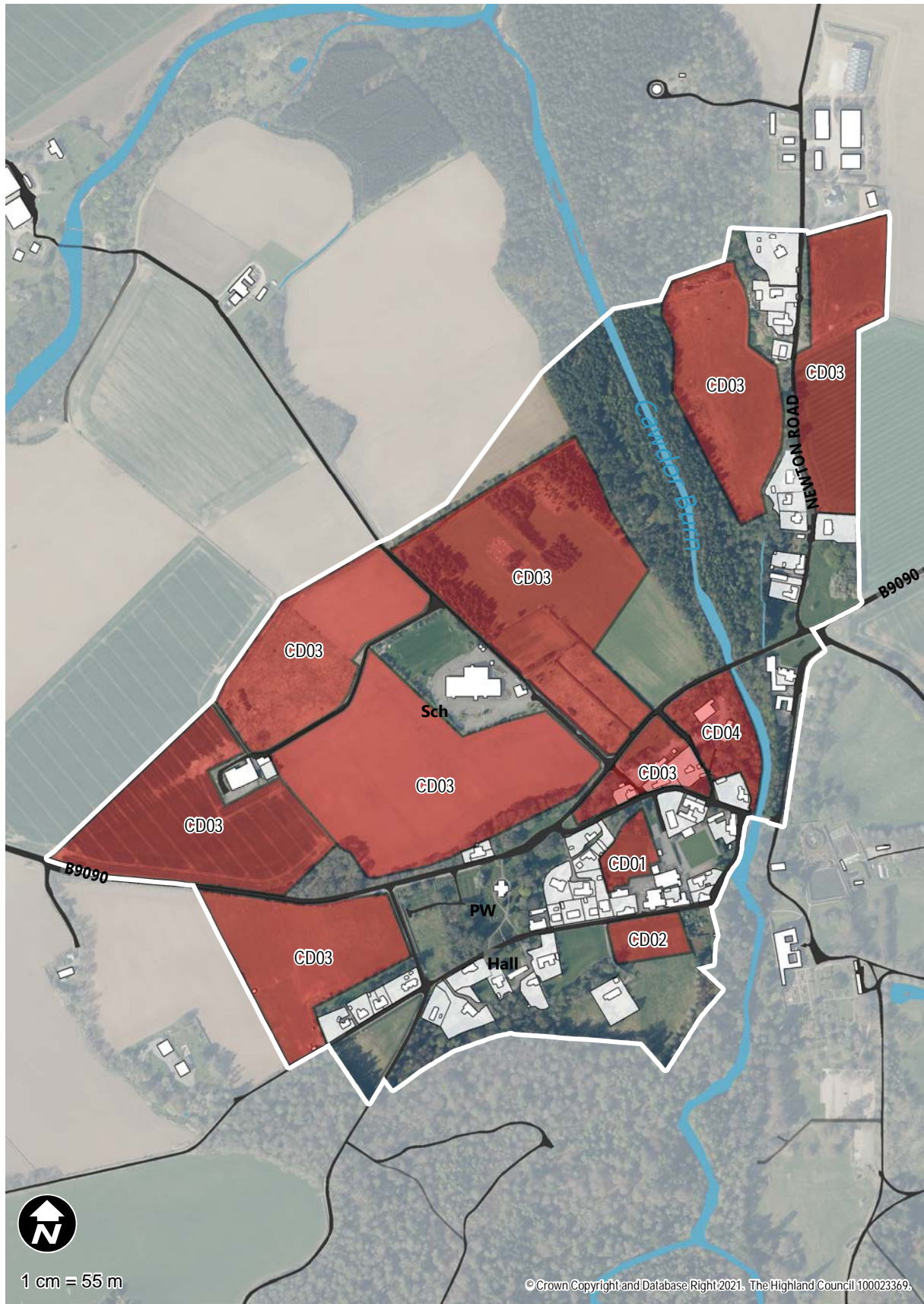
Cawdor is not seen as a suitable place for strategic growth given its limited facilities and public transport accessibility and corresponding need for new infrastructure. This means that new residents will be almost entirely reliant on car-based transport. In addition, since Cawdor was first earmarked for development the spare capacity in the school which was identified in HwLDP, has also been taken up.

As there is potential within the village core for some small scale infill and rounding off development, we intend to reclassify Cawdor as a Growing Settlement within the next Proposed Plan. We will take forward the Placemaking Priorities below, into the Proposed Plan to help determine planning applications and investment decisions. Particular attention must be paid to the design and layout of new development in order to integrate it with the existing high quality historic environment.

Placemaking Priorities

- Support small-scale infill and rounding off the village.
- High quality of architectural design and layout in order to complement the surrounding historic environment.
- Avoid areas which are at risk of flooding from the Cawdor Burn.
- Safeguard from development and enhance wherever possible the mature woodland.
- Seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of the A96 Landward Trail.

Picture 3.1 Cawdor



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Non-Preferred Sites

CD01

Name: Old School Playground

Use(s): Housing

CD02

Name: Opposite Old School

Use(s): Housing

CD03

Name: Cawdor expansion

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Business, Community)

CD04

Name: Old Smithy

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

We are not preferring any of the existing allocations in Cawdor as is not considered as a sustainable and viable place for strategic growth. This is due to its limited facilities, poor public transport options, and lack of spare primary school capacity. We think that Cawdor is better suited as a Growing Settlement which will allow for suitable small scale, infill and rounding off opportunities only.

3.7 Conon Bridge | Drochaid Sguideil

With over 2,000 existing residents, trunk road connectivity, a rail halt, an attractive outlook, no water and sewerage capacity constraints and a plentiful supply of development land, Conon Bridge is well placed to accommodate further growth.

However, other factors indicate that that growth should be phased in step with infrastructure capacities. The local primary school that also serves Maryburgh residents is over capacity, parts of the village are constrained by flood risk, and the settlement's generally northwesterly aspect is poor in terms of solar gain potential.

Taking account of these development factors we believe that the Plan should reassess and then reduce its existing development site commitments. Only Braes of Conon has serious and current developer interest and it lies close to the primary school and principal village shop.

Placemaking Priorities

- To support limited growth hand in hand with a programmed increase in local primary school capacity.
- To undertake flood defence works that will reduce the risk of flooding to existing properties and potential redevelopment sites.
- To locate new development closest to the rail halt, school and commercial facilities notably at Braes of Conon.
- To seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of an active travel link between Conon Bridge and Muir of Ord.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.6 Conon Bridge



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Sites

Preferred Sites

CB01

Name: Braes of Conon (North)

Use(s): Housing

CB02

Name: Braes of Conon (South)

Use(s): Housing

CB03

Name: Former Public House and Adjoining Land

Use(s): Housing

CB04

Name: Former Fish Processing Site

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business, Retail)

Land at Braes of Conon is part serviced, has a willing landowner, an attractive outlook, likely developer interest, and is in reasonable proximity to the village's principal shop and primary school and is therefore preferred for new housing development. Sites at the former fish processing factory and public house have received recent planning permissions and the related flood protection scheme will be progressed.

Alternative Sites

CB05

Name: Schoolhouse Belt

Use(s): Housing

CB06

Name: Former Petrol Filling Station

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

CB07

Name: Riverford

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Housing)

Two of the three alternative sites are earmarked for development in the existing local development plan but all have constraints in terms of availability, marketability, contamination, flood risk scheme dependence, and/or woodland. In quantitative housing requirement terms and in terms of school capacity restriction these additional sites are not needed in the short term. We invite comment and evidence on whether any of these sites are more viable, more effective and/or otherwise more suitable than the Council's preferred sites.

3.8 Contin | Cunndainn

Contin is a small attractive village which straddles the A835 and has a prime location on the North Coast 500 tourist route. In recent times, Contin has seen small amounts of housing growth, with some self-build plots being built at Woodland Park. Contin Community Trust has planning permission to build a new community hub/hall on the playing field of the old Primary School.

Contin is not considered a suitable location for significant amounts of growth due to the relatively few services and facilities it provides and the limited access to public transport. We do not believe it merits classification as a main village in the Plan's hierarchy of settlements. Instead we are considering re-categorising it as a Growing Settlement in the Proposed Plan as there is potential in the village for some small scale infill and rounding off development. We will use Placemaking Priorities in the Proposed Plan. These would be used to help determine planning applications.

There are three allocated sites which we are proposing to no longer allocate. Four additional small scale sites for housing were suggested through the Call for Sites (grouped under Land at Tor View), however each one was for less than ten houses, which is generally the minimum number of houses for a site to be considered for allocation.

Placemaking Priorities

- Maintain Five Acre Wood as green space.
- Ensure development is set back from any mature trees.
- Any development close to Black Water River will need to ensure that it is not at flood risk.
- Any proposed tourist facilities near the filling station should ensure frontage onto the A835.
- Ensure mitigation against any potential impact on the Preas Mairi chambered cairn Scheduled Monument.
- Promote active travel links which connect to existing paths.
- Sites within the Hinterland so infill development opportunities should be pursued.
- Improve public transport connectivity.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.7 Contin



Sites

Non-Preferred Sites

CT01

Name: Woodland Park

Use(s): Housing

CT02

Name: Contin Mains

Use(s): Mixed Use
(Housing/Business/Tourism/Retail)

CT03

Name: Central Contin

Use(s): Mixed Use
(Housing/Business/Tourism/Retail/Community)

CT04

Name: Land at Tor View

Use(s): Housing

The sites are all shown as non-preferred due to the proposal to re-classify Contin as a Growing Settlement which would mean there would be no sites allocated within the village.

3.9 Cromarty | Cromba

Cromarty has a beautiful, coastal, below raised beach setting and an extensive outlook afforded by its location towards the end of the Black Isle peninsula. The town's former sources of employment notably fishing have far less of a role to play but the legacy of built investment is of high quality and justifies the conservation area status of much of the settlement.

However, this peripherality and physical containment suggest that future growth options will be limited. The town's population stands at just under 700 and is declining. Commuter housing demand is low and many local jobs are dependent upon seasonal tourism demand. It would be imprudent to encourage commuting from the town because of the lack of effective public transport travel options to major work centres, the length and carbon impact of car journeys and the village centre congestion issues along the A832. Steeper ground and good agricultural land to the south and east of the settlement and the Cromarty Firth to the north and west impose significant physical constraints on growth. The town's sewage works has very little spare capacity. More positively, Cromarty has no water supply or primary school physical capacity issues.

Taking account of these development factors we believe that this Plan should limit the number of new development sites. Land at Sandilands is the best candidate for expansion because of its centrality and visual containment. Otherwise, only smaller scale infill development below the raised beach is likely to be acceptable.

Placemaking Priorities

- To support growth via suitable infill development below the raised beach.
- To control the scale of growth within the limits of sewerage capacity.
- To encourage the sensitively designed development of the central Sandilands site.
- To protect and enhance the town's heritage assets notably the conservation area, links and wooded margins.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.8 Cromarty



1 cm = 45 m

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3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

CM01

Name: Sandilands

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community)

CM02

Name: Bayview Crescent

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Community)

Land at Sandilands benefits from a long standing development plan allocation, is flat, central and is of a size that could accommodate a range of uses. There appears to be a consensus in the community that a dedicated campervan site would better manage and divert demand for that type of overnight accommodation from the links area. Land at Bayview Crescent could provide such a site. Several adjoining options are available at this location subject to landownership, access and woodland issues.

Non-Preferred Sites

CM03

Name: South of Manse

Use(s): Housing (and potential allotments)

Land above Cromarty's escarpment is visually and physically separate from the main part of the town. Development of this site would set a powerful precedent for further development on the raised beach. Given the settlement's lack of sewerage capacity, low housing demand, lack of local employment and declining population there is no overriding reason to justify this breach.

3.10 Croy | Crothaidh

Croy is a relatively small village located on the B9091 halfway between Inverness and Nairn. The population of Croy has increased nearly 10% in the past 10 years due mainly to the completion of a large housing development on the north western edge of the settlement.

Scotia Homes have recently begun developing another strategic expansion to the west of Croy which includes 100 new homes. The first phase also saw a cafe and retail unit built and which is now occupied by ANTA.

The new town of Tornagrain lies immediately to the north and as the rate of development has progressed there has been increasing pressure on local infrastructure including Croy Primary and the road network.

Due to its lack of facilities and limited sustainable transport options, Croy is positioned within Tier 3 of the Settlement Hierarchy which means that future housing development, with the exception of the consented scheme to the west of the primary school, will be limited.

Placemaking Priorities

- Improvements to the transport network, particularly around the junction of the B9091 and the B9006 and along Croy Road to Tornagrain.
- Ensure that the new primary school at Tornagrain is delivered at an appropriate time to avoid undue pressure on the existing school.
- Seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of the A96 Landward Trail.

Map 3.9 Croy



Sites

Preferred Sites

CR01

Name: West of Primary School

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail and Community)

Land west of the Primary School is preferred as it has recently received planning permission for the development of 100 homes and is currently being built out.

Non-Preferred Sites

CR02

Name: East of B9006

Use(s): Housing

CR03

Name: North West of Primary School

Use(s): Housing

CR04

Name: East of Heatherpark

Use(s): Housing

Whilst the land east of the B9006 is centrally located and is arguably a logical expansion of the settlement, no interest has been shown in taking the site forward. The development of 100 new homes west of the primary school is also expected to address the village's housing needs for the foreseeable future.

The land north west of the primary school (identified by the developer as Phase 2) is not preferred due to Croy's position (tier 3) within the Settlement Hierarchy. Strategic levels of housing development will not be supported in the places which have limited facilities and sustainable transport options.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Similarly, land to the east of Heatherpark is non-preferred due to its position in the Settlement Hierarchy and as it would result in Croy unnecessarily expanding in a different direction that what is currently supported.

3.11 Culbokie | Cùil Bhàicidh

Culbokie's primary function is as a dormitory village of around 650 people many of whom are employed in Inverness and Easter Ross. Without effective non car accessibility to these jobs, it is not a sustainable location for further growth. It has grown in the past because of its attractive outlook across the Cromarty Firth and proximity to the A9 with its connection to major work and facility centres. The settlement has also benefited from adequate water, sewerage and school capacity.

We don't believe that the settlement should be earmarked for growth in the future. Culbokie's elevation and generally northwesterly aspect present a relatively poor microclimate, the local population is declining and perhaps most importantly it would not be cost effective to promote more sustainable travel from this location. Moreover the village's shape which has been elongated because of the local pattern of landownership and its availability for development. This extended linear pattern makes within village active travel less likely.

Taking account of these development factors we believe that this Plan should only support completion of already permitted sites, a brownfield redevelopment opportunity and completion of established infill sites.

Placemaking Priorities

- To consolidate the village by completion of infill development sites.
- To limit the scale of new development in line with the village's limited infrastructure capacity.
- To promote a mix of housing, business and community sites in central locations.
- To retain the greenspace and green networks in and around the village.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.10 Culbokie



Sites

Preferred Sites

CU01

Name: North of Cairns

Use(s): Housing

CU02

Name: South of Village Store

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business)

CU03

Name: East of Old Primary School

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Business)

Sites CU01 and CU02 benefit from planning permission and provide for a mix of uses in a location as close as possible to the centre of the village. Land adjoining the old primary school is previously developed and underutilised.

Alternative Sites

CU04

Name: North of Solus Or

Use(s): Housing

CU05

Name: South of Tir Aulinn **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community, Retail)

Some land earmarked for housing development in the existing development plan is no longer needed in quantitative terms. Apart from completion of the smaller, infill housing sites and the sites preferred above, we do not believe that it is necessary to reallocate other land. Moreover, sites CU04 and CU05 may have land availability issues and have not been subject to recorded developer interest.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

3.12 Dingwall | Inbhir Pheofharain

Dingwall plays a significant role as the service centre for Ross and Cromarty, serving communities to the north and west as well as those in closer proximity. The town has two schools – Dingwall Primary School and Dingwall Academy, both of which require major extensions. There are known issues around car-parking and drop off points at the Primary School. There is an aspiration to improve on the current situation and to provide two multi use games areas.

Public realm improvements in Dingwall Town Centre have been delivered in recent times through its Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme, which has seen the restoration of historic properties along the High Street.

Dingwall sits on National Cycle Route 1 but there are no dedicated places to store bikes nor any dedicated cycle lanes. Improvement of active travel routes in Dingwall must be a key priority, as well as the completion of the Peffery Way link to Strathpeffer. In particular any new development around Dingwall North should ensure that active travel routes to the Primary School and the Academy are factored into the design of any development. It is well served by public transport with a regular bus service and a train station serving the town.

The growth of Dingwall continues to be shaped by the local landscape and the risk of flooding given its location at the head of the Cromarty Firth and convergence of the Rivers Peffery and Conon.

Dingwall North is also constrained by the need to deliver improved transport infrastructure. The current Inner Moray Firth LDP refers to the Kinnardie Link Road. This is not in the Council's current capital programme, however there is still opportunity to progress with the section known as Dingwall North Link Road, potentially by completing two gaps that would ultimately link Docharty Road and Old Evanton Road. The Dingwall North Link Road would also provide a possible circular route for public transport and would improve connectivity between the housing developments in Dingwall North for all modes of travel.

A transport study based on traffic surveys, was commissioned in 2018 to understand the implications of potential housing development on the transport network in Dingwall. Following the results of the survey a report was approved by Ross and Cromarty Area Committee in January 2019 which set out that 150 houses could be developed in Dingwall North in advance of the Kinnardie Link Road, subject to agreed mitigation, including short term improvements to key junctions, traffic management measures and active travel infrastructure requirements. Of the 150 houses, a number of these houses have already been built or have already been given planning permission. It may be possible to add additional housing numbers if the Dingwall North Link Road sections are completed. A study will be carried out to determine these figures.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

The diversity of business and industrial uses at the west of Dingwall make it an attractive place for both the location of new and expansion of existing businesses.

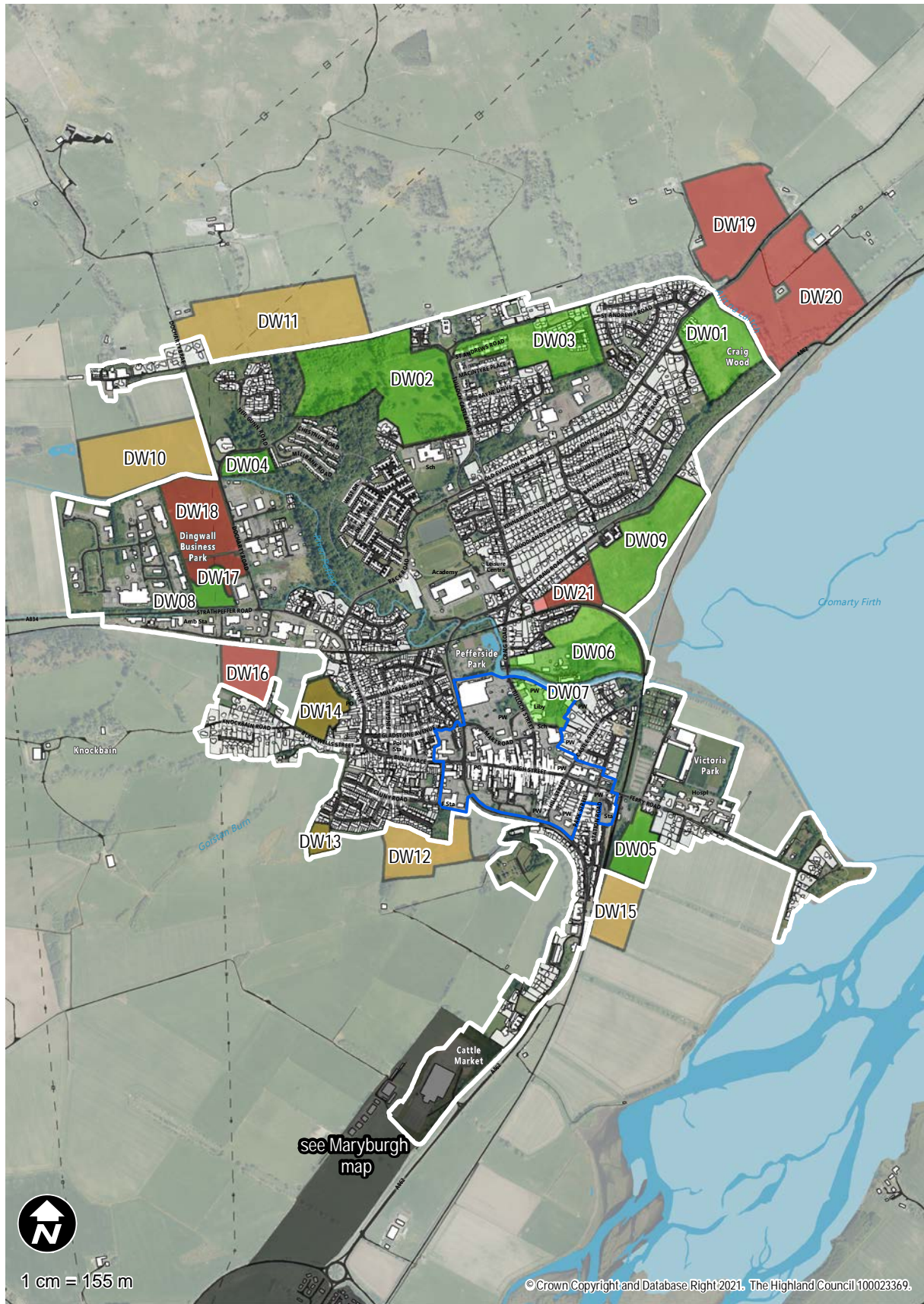
As a key service and employment centre that is in close proximity to Inverness and has good transport links there is likely to be demand for continued housing and employment growth in Dingwall. As such Dingwall is considered as a strategic main settlement where significant housing, business, industrial and retail growth will continue to be supported.

Placemaking Priorities

- Deliver improved transport infrastructure.
- Improvement of active travel routes in the town and the Peffery Way link to Strathpeffer.
- Active travel link between Dingwall and Evanton.
- Provide additional car-parking and drop off points at the Primary School.
- Protect and enhance the Conservation Area and continue with the improvement of historic buildings on the High Street.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.11 Dingwall



Sites

Preferred Sites

DW01

Name: Dingwall North - Craig Road

Use(s): Housing

DW02

Name: Dingwall North - South of Tulloch
Castle

Use(s): Housing

DW03

Name: Dingwall North - St Andrews Road

Use(s): Housing

DW04

Name: Docharty Road East

Use(s): Housing

DW05

Name: Land Opposite Sherriff Court

Use(s): Mixed Use
(Business/Tourism/.Community/Housing)

DW06

Name: Dingwall Riverside (North)

Use(s): Mixed Use
(Business/Industrial/Community)

DW07

Name: Dingwall Riverside (South)

Use(s): Mixed Use
(Business/Retail/Community)

DW08

Name: Land to East of Dingwall Business Park

Use(s): Business

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

DW09

Name: Craig Road

Use(s): Community

DW01, DW02 and DW03 have already seen some development and there is active interest in the continuation of this development. They will also aid progress with the development of the Dingwall North Link Road, potentially by completing two gaps that would ultimately link Docharty Road and Old Evanton Road. DW03 should help provide car-parking and drop off points at the Primary School and provide two multi use games areas. The site at Craig Road identified as a community use would be suitable for use as a district park. Land to the East of Dingwall Business Park (DW08) remain a suitable location subject to not developing areas to the north which are subject to flood risk. DW06 Dingwall Riverside North is preferred for mixed use including business, industrial and community. It was suggested during the call for sites that the northern half of the site at Old River Road could be allocated for housing. Housing is not a preferred use of the site due to potential flood risk.

Alternative Sites

DW10

Name: Dingwall North - Docharty Brae

Use(s): Housing

DW11

Name: Dingwall North - Upper Docharty

Use(s): Housing

DW12

Name: MacDonald Road

Use(s): Housing

DW13

Name: South of Macrae Crescent

Use(s): Housing

DW14

Name: Gallows Hill

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

DW15

Name: Land opposite Sheriff Court - South **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing/Business)

Land at DW11 benefits from planning permission, however it is dependent on the Kinnardie Link Road being in place. DW10 may have potential for development at the eastern end of the site which is outwith potential flood risk. DW12 Macdonald Road may have potential for a small number of units, however the site is constrained by its steepness. DW13 South of Macrea Crescent has the potential for a small amount of infill development. It currently sits within the SDA as grey land. Land at Gallows Hill has potential for development if access issues can be resolved. DW15 is a proposed extension to the existing allocation at Land Opposite the Sheriff Court. The existing allocation is being shown as a preferred site for mixed use. The extension to the site is being proposed for housing and business. There may be potential for some form of business use on the site.

Non-Preferred Sites

DW16

Name: Ledvargid **Use(s):** Housing

DW17

Name: Land to East of Dingwall Business Park **Use(s):** Business

DW18

Name: Dochcarty Road **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Industrial/Business/Retail)

DW19

Name: Land at Old Evanton Road **Use(s):** Housing

DW20

Name: Land to West of Mountrich Farm **Use(s):** Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

DW21

Name: Land to Rear of Craig Road

Use(s): Housing

Land at Ledvardig is constrained by the single track road access. Land at Docharty Road (DW18) and to the rear of Craig Drive (DW21) are non preferred due to the potential flood risk. DW19 and DW20 feel removed from the rest of Dingwall and there are more central sites available for development in the short to medium term.

3.13 Dores | Duras

Dores is a small village of just 145 residents with facilities including a primary school (currently at 58% capacity but due to increase to 84% in 10 years), a bar/restaurant and free church. It is a popular visitor destination due to its attractive location, nestled on the western banks of Loch Ness and long, south facing pebble beach.

Other facilities are fairly limited, with a basic playpark and grass sports pitch in the centre of the village. Inverness Royal Academy is forecast to experience significant capacity pressure and a major extension will be needed. The bus service is the only means of public transport and despite its infrequency it does provide an opportunity for commuting to Inverness.

There are a handful of development options in Dores, with suggested housing sites located at the north and south of the village and proposals for mixed use and community uses in the centre. Given its position in the Settlement Hierarchy only the land south of the Church of Scotland is preferred. Other sites may have potential but more information is required to determine their suitability, effectiveness and contribution towards making Dores more sustainable.

Due to the size of Dores and the scale of development proposed there may be merit in reclassifying it as a Growing Settlement. This would still mean that we will direct development towards Dores but only on a scale more reflective of the existing settlement size and focused on infilling and rounding off. Feedback during the consultation will help inform the decision.

Placemaking Priorities

- Protect and enhance the playpark and grass sports pitch in the centre of the village.
- Increase car parking facilities to serve both the local community and visitors during peak times.
- Work with Scottish Water to upgrade the water supply capacity.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.12 Dores



Sites

Preferred Sites

D001

Name: Land south of Church of Scotland **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community, Tourism)

The existing Mixed Use allocation south of the Parish Hall is preferred for development as it is a logical infill site within the settlement. It also has developer interest and can deliver a mix of uses, including a potential expansion of the cemetery.

Alternative Sites

D002

Name: North of Mill Croft **Use(s):** Housing

D003

Name: South of Dores Hall **Use(s):** Housing

D004

Name: North of Playing Field **Use(s):** Community

The site south of Dores village hall benefits from having developer interest and the potential to improve the existing access to the hall. However, it is a sloping wooded site which will require improved active travel provision to the village centre.

If developed to a high standard of architectural siting and design, the land north of Mill Croft could form a reasonable expansion of the settlement. However, at present there is limited quantitative need and other sites are more preferable.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

The large area allocated for community uses to the north of the football pitch is shown as Alternative as it is unclear whether it poses an effective development site. More information is needed on what is being proposed and whether it will be made available by the landowner.

Non-Preferred Sites

D005

Name: Land at South Dores

Use(s): Housing

Land proposed at Dores south is not preferred as it is a sloping wooded site which would require substantial investment in providing active travel connections to the centre of the village. There are better alternative sites which meet local housing need.

3.14 Drumnadrochit | Druim na Drochaid

Drumnadrochit benefits from a range of facilities beyond what would be expected for the size of the settlement and wider Glenurquhart catchment population. The principal settlement accommodates around 1,150 permanent residents and this figure has shown a slow but steady increase over the last 20 years. Its popularity is based upon its proximity to the work centre of Inverness, attractive setting close to Loch Ness, good range of local facilities and location straddling a major tourist route. The local high and primary schools have some spare capacity and investment to protect the village centre from flooding is programmed.

However, it is not a sustainable location for significant further growth. Car based travel to larger facilities and work is still necessary and improving public transport or active travel provision to Inverness would not be cost effective relative to the extra population that could reasonably be accommodated in Glenurquhart. Similarly, local water and sewerage capacity is constrained and additional investment to increase capacity is not programmed by Scottish Water. Add in the physical constraints of the steep surrounding hill slopes, areas of flood risk, the restrictions on new access to the A82 trunk road, and the environmental and amenity benefits of preserving local greenspace then we believe that a cautious approach to future growth is sensible.

Taking account of these development factors we believe that the "legacy" allocations at Drum Farm and adjoining the new Co-op store should be completed but that no new expansion areas should be promoted.

Placemaking Priorities

- To consolidate the village by supporting the completion of its central development sites.
- To secure an improved range, quality and location of commercial and community facilities.
- To improve active travel accessibility to these more centralised facilities.
- To preserve the greenspaces and green corridors that permeate through the settlement and enhance their role as active travel routes.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.13 Drumnadrochit



Sites

Preferred Sites

DR01

Name: Land Adjoining New Co-op

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Business)

DR02

Name: Drum Farm

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

DR03

Name: Land West of Post Office

Use(s): Mixed Use (Tourism, Business, Retail, Community)

DR04

Name: Retail Units on A82/Balmacaan Road and Land Adjoining

Use(s): Mixed Use (Retail, Business, Housing, Community)

DR05

Name: Shinty Pitch and Adjoining Land

Use(s): Community

DR06

Name: Schools Junction

Use(s): Community

The two large central sites represent previous, in principle, development commitments. DR01 is part permitted and part constructed. Land at Drum Farm can also help consolidate the settlement in a central location where, other things being equal, a mix of uses can promote more sustainable travel to local facilities and employment. Land to the rear of the post office will be better protected from flooding following completion of the programmed flood scheme and is also in an optimum central location close to other commercial facilities and the principal public car park. Other than

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

these sites, expansion of shinty facilities would most sensibly be made adjoining the existing pitch and underutilised land closer to the high and primary schools may have potential for complementary education or other community use.

Non-Preferred Sites

DR07

Name: Land South of Medical Centre

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Business, Community)

DR08

Name: Easter Milton

Use(s): Either Housing or Community

The preferred sites above are existing commitments with firm developer interest and are part serviced. In contrast, land south of the medical centre is more speculative albeit also part serviced. We believe that the housing capacity of the preferred sites are sufficient to accommodate the village's growth requirements in the short and medium term. Allocating another large site for development in Drumnadrochit would not meet the Plan's overall sustainability objective. The suggested development site between the village and Milton is bordered by an area of flood risk and is relatively distant from the village centre and its facilities.

3.15 Evanton | Baile Eòghainn

Evanton is an important village in East Ross with a population of around 1,400 which is suitable for continued modest growth. It provides a number of community facilities including a Primary School.

It is strategically located within 32km of employment centres at Inverness, Dingwall, Alness, Highland Deephaven, Nigg and Invergordon. There are opportunities for intensification/expansion at Highland Deephaven. This site is not shown within the village map as it is included within the section on Economic Development Areas.

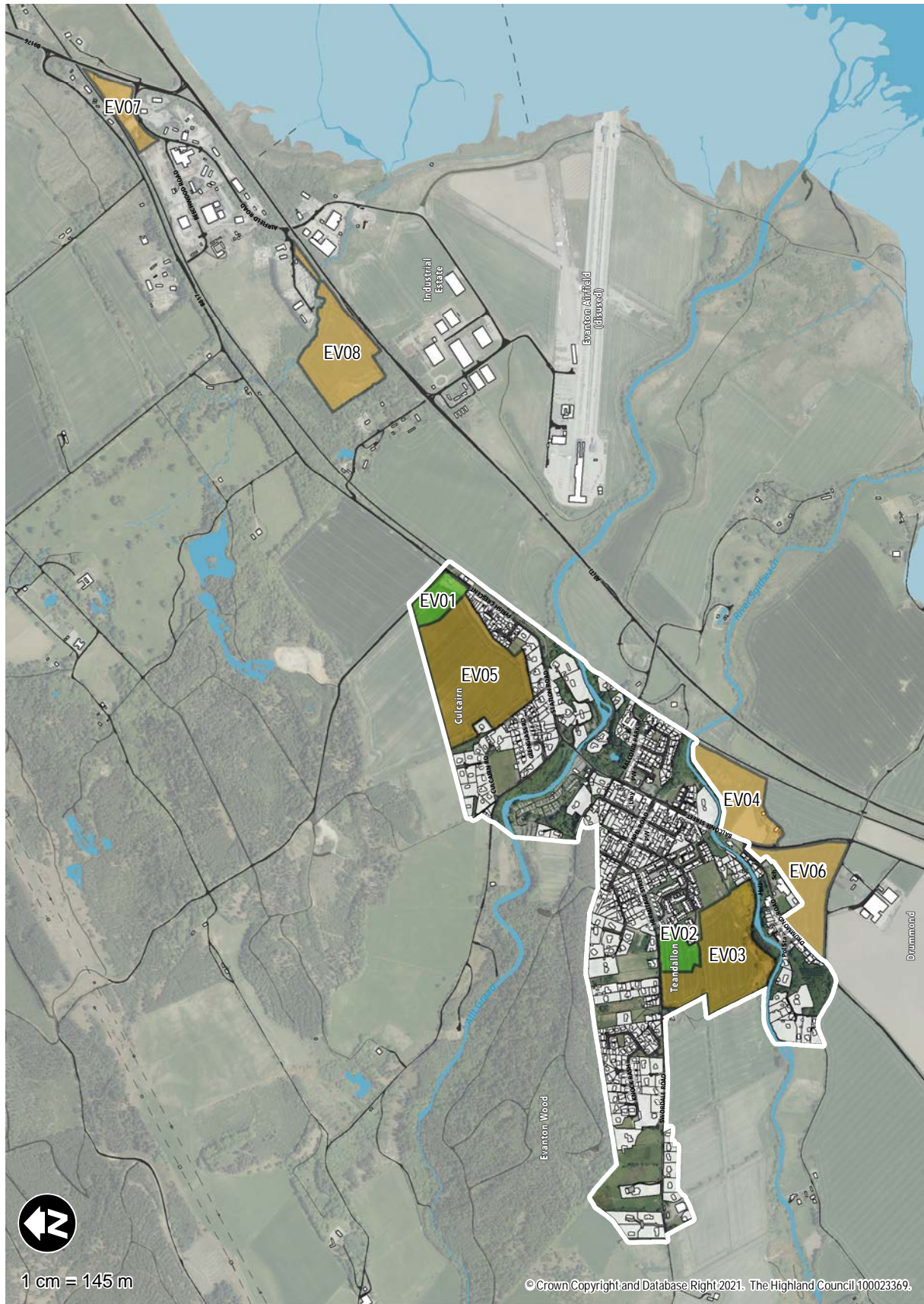
There is a legacy of oversupply of housing sites in Evanton. This is now manifesting itself with the site at Culcairn having Planning in Principle for 160 houses and Teandallon East has permission for 140 units. It is unlikely that both of these sites will be required to facilitate demand for housing in Evanton during the lifetime of the development plan. It may be that part of either one or both of these sites could be identified as the strategic growth direction for the village. This would be preferable than having two large sites competing and potentially stagnating, with neither reaching a completed development stage.

Evanton would benefit from having its rail halt re-opened; we think land should be safeguarded in the village boundary for this aspiration to happen if funding becomes available. Achieving a rail halt would provide people in Evanton with an alternative to driving cars for longer journeys and it could also provide an environmentally sustainable transport connection for people working at Highland Deephaven.

Placemaking Priorities

- Opportunity for limited amounts of house building.
- Re-open the rail halt.
- Improved internal road provision, particularly along Swordale Road where capacity issues exist.
- Limited capacity at Kiltearn Primary School.

Map 3.14 Evanton



Sites

Preferred Sites

EV01

Name: Culcairn - Phase 1

Use(s): Mixed Use
(Housing/Business/Community)

EV02

Name: Teandallon East - Phase 1

Use(s): Housing

Culcairn has planning permission in principle for 160 units, however a Matters Specified in Conditions application will be required in order for the houses to be built. There is a masterplan associated with the site which sets out phasing. Phase 1 indicates 40 houses. Teandallon East has permission for 140 houses. There is also a phasing plan identified for this site with Phase 1 providing 40 houses. Phase 1 for both of these sites is identified as preferred sites as they are realistic options that could come forward.

Alternative Sites

EV03

Name: Teandallon East

Use(s): Housing

EV04

Name: Southeast of Evanton Bridge

Use(s): Housing

EV05

Name: Culcairn

Use(s): Mixed Use
(Housing/Business/Community)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

EV06

Name: Drummond Farm

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

EV07

Name: Airfield Road

Use(s): Business

EV08

Name: Evanton Industrial Estate

Use(s): Industry and Business

There is currently an over supply of land allocated for housing. Culcairn benefits from Planning in Principle and there is active developer interest at Teandallon East. However two large sites are not required. The land at Teandallon shown as amber is more likely to be achieved longer term.

There has been no active interest in developing land at Evanton Bridge and Drummond Farm.

Land allocated for business and industrial uses at Airfield Road and Evanton Industrial Estate are peripheral from the village. Although removed from the village, there is potential for these sites to continue to provide opportunities for local employment within active travel range.

3.16 Fort Augustus | Cille Chuimein

Fort Augustus only accommodates a stable, year round population of just over 600 but expands during the tourism season because it is well placed to capture trade passing along its trunk road, canal and long distance trail corridors. It also supports higher order facilities such as a high school because of its distance from any urban area. Education, water and sewerage facilities have adequate existing or programmed capacity.

In terms of constraints, the same transport, river and tourism corridors create severance of movement across the village, junction constraints, heritage features that should be protected, flood risk areas, and marked seasonal variations in demand and therefore employment. The patchwork of crofting tenancies and ownership within the village continues to thwart attempts to assemble larger development sites.

Taking account of these development factors we believe that this Plan should consolidate rather than seek to promote expansion of Fort Augustus. In practice, this means a preference for smaller infill sites.

Placemaking Priorities

- To support smaller scale infill expansion where land ownership and other constraints allow.
- To complete water supply improvements.
- To encourage comprehensively serviced mixed use development close to the village centre and south of the Old Convent.
- To avoid fluvial flood risk issues and mitigate the severance of active travel movement caused by the transport corridors.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.15 Fort Augustus



Sites

Preferred Sites

FA01

Name: Glebe

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business)

FA02

Name: Village Centre Car Park and Adjoining Land

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business, Retail)

The fragmented pattern of landownership within the village and other constraints limit the land that is available and viable for significant development. Land south of the Old Convent is already subject to developer interest and if successful then could be extended. Land within and adjoining the village car park is in the most sustainable location and could be reconfigured to allow more and better laid out car parking plus enabling mixed use development.

Alternative Sites

FA03

Name: Market Hill

Use(s): Housing, Golf Course Extension, Community

FA04

Name: A82 Caravan Park

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

FA05

Name: St Benedict's Abbey

Use(s): Community

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Land at Market Hill and the A82 Caravan Park is unlikely to be released for properly serviced, significant development because of landownership/crofting interests. Remaining development potential at the Abbey is limited by its heritage constraints.

Non-Preferred Sites

FA06

Name: Abertarff Place

Use(s): Housing

FA07

Name: South East of Swing Bridge

Use(s): Business/Tourism

Land at Abertarff Place is underutilised but has underground sewerage and some amenity value to adjoining residents. The Clansman Centre and its adjoining car parking is well utilised and therefore its reallocation for business/tourism use is unnecessary.

3.17 Fortrose and Rosemarkie | A' Chananaich agus Ros Maircnidh

Fortrose and Rosemarkie combined house around 2,350 permanent residents. Because of this size and Fortrose's role as a "town centre" for a larger rural hinterland, higher order facilities such as the Academy and Leisure Centre are also present. Access to the Firth, good farmland and an attractive outlook are the factors that have attracted people to the area and most continue to do so.

However, this is not a sustainable location for further significant growth. All of the eastern Black Isle settlements are primarily served by the A832 spine road, which in passing through the constricted historic cores of those settlements results in congestion and other related issues. Moreover, the length of this connection and the existing and potential catchment population served means that it will not be cost effective to improve non car accessibility to the eastern Black Isle. Accordingly, we do not believe that these settlements should be earmarked for further residential growth beyond that already committed and that other investment should only be in line with this approach of consolidation rather than expansion.

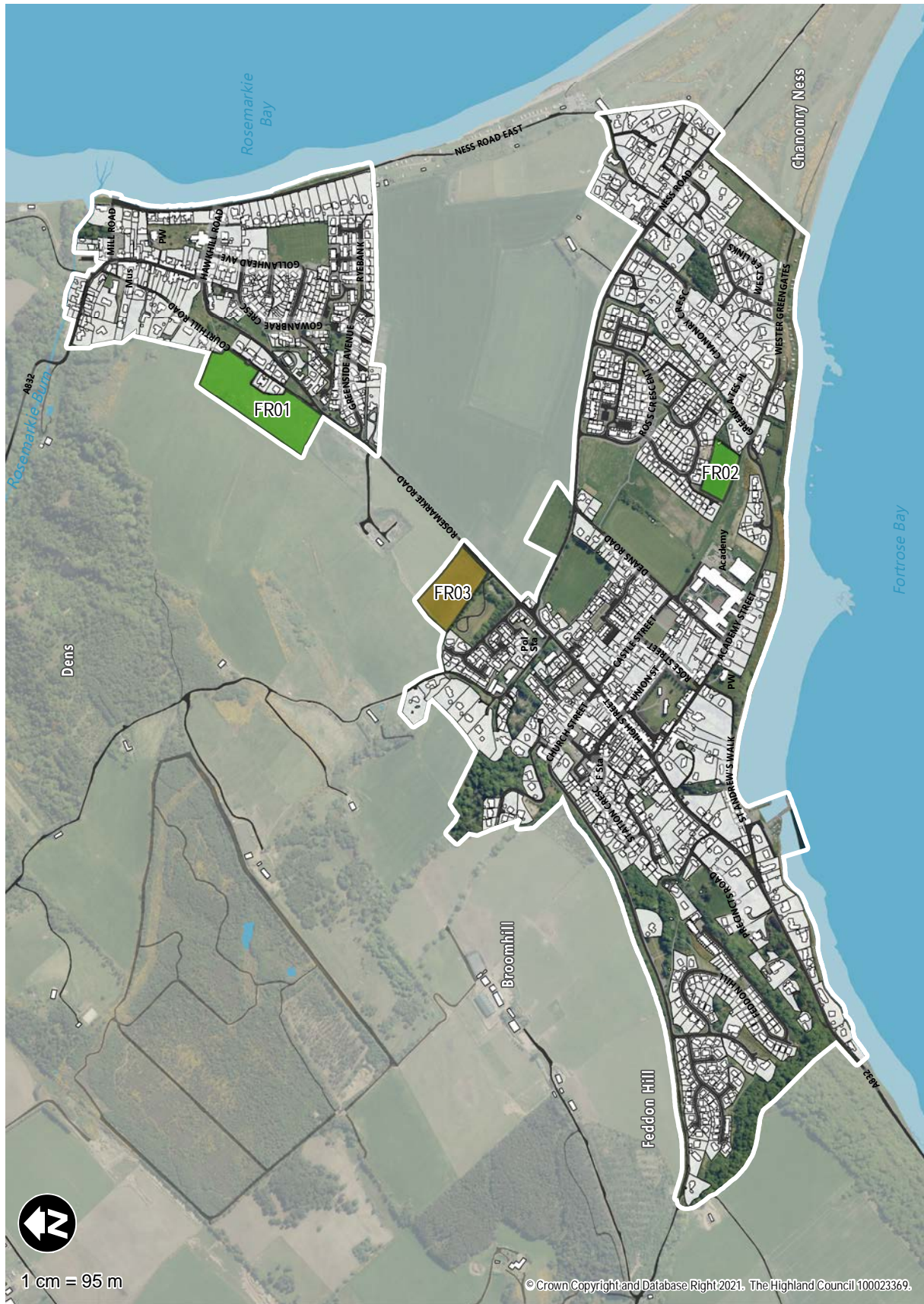
Apart from being in an unsustainable location in terms of travel patterns, Fortrose and Rosemarkie have very limited additional waste water treatment capacity and both its high and primary schools are near or over capacity. Add in coastal flood risk, prime agricultural land, steep inland slopes and heritage constraints then the justification for constraint is even more pronounced.

Taking account of the above development factors we believe that this Plan should only allocate previously earmarked or permitted development sites.

Placemaking Priorities

- To consolidate rather than further expand the settlements.
- To secure local infrastructure improvements in parallel with this lower growth scenario particularly through developer funded traffic management measures.
- To complete allocated and permitted development sites at Ness Gap and Greenside Farm.
- To safeguard the setting, heritage features and distinct identities of the two principal settlements.

Map 3.16 Fortrose and Rosemarkie



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Sites

Preferred Sites

FR01

Name: Greenside Farm

Use(s): Housing

FR02

Name: Ness Gap

Use(s): Housing

Land at Ness Gap and Greenside Farm benefits from planning permission and/or allocation in the current development plan. Ness Gap land not already earmarked for housing development should be safeguarded for either community or relocated retail use.

Alternative Sites

FR03

Name: Cemetery Extension

Use(s): Community

There is no short term need or Council capital programme allocation to expand the cemetery and therefore it is proposed not to reallocate land for this purpose.

3.18 Inchmore | An Innis Mhòr

Inchmore is no longer a suitable location for significant growth. Its primary school has closed, its spine road is no longer trunked, public transport connectivity and local employment opportunities are limited, high voltage lines pass overhead, flood risk affects the eastern end of the settlement and previously allocated development land has not been released to developers. There is also very limited local primary school and water supply capacity and therefore we do not believe that Inchmore merits classification as a "main" village in the Plan's hierarchy of settlements. Instead we believe it should be classified as a growing settlement which means that smaller scale development may be supported subject to the placemaking priorities set out below.

Placemaking Priorities

- To direct any further, smaller scale housing and other development to land adjoining the former village hall and away from more steeply sloping and visually prominent land to the south, and land subject to unacceptable flood risk to the east.
- To limit the scale of any development to the capacity of local infrastructure in particular the capacity of junctions onto the A862, of Kirkhill Primary School and of Glen Convinth Water Treatment Works.
- The settlement has very limited public greenspace and therefore the few attractive features such as the former school playing field, road side verges and woodland clusters should be protected from future development proposals.

Map 3.17 Inchmore



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Non-Preferred Sites

IC01

Name: West of Former Primary School

Use(s): Housing

IC02

Name: East of Inchmore Gallery

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail)

IC03

Name: Former Inchmore Hall

Use(s): Business

The former village hall is in a now long standing business use which has not sought expansion onto adjoining land. The other two sites in the approved development plan have had no recent development interest. This lack of availability and the other constraints outlined above suggest that they should not be specifically re-identified in the new Plan.

3.19 Invergordon | Inbhir Ghòrdain

Invergordon has a rich and varied history, based largely around its deep water harbour. The harbour has continued to expand its energy and tourism services and has invested in several major developments in the past 20 years.

The harbour is owned and managed as a Trust Port by the Cromarty Firth Port Authority. Up until this year, they had seen steady growth in the cruise ship industry with passenger numbers reaching nearly 200,000 annually. Whilst this industry has brought a major economic boost for the Highland economy, localised traffic and parking impacts have emerged within the town. Resolving these issues, together with regenerating key brownfield sites to create a more welcoming and attractive town will be important priorities.

Despite this economic growth, Invergordon's population declined since the last census in 2011 by 2.5% and is now home to 3,900 people. Although, the strategic level of housing allocations which are set out in the adopted plan are largely undeveloped, progress has been made on taking forward certain sites.

Whilst we still think that Invergordon is a good place to direct new housing - given its wide range of facilities, spare school capacity and good transport links - the housing forecasts indicate we don't need any much housing land as was allocated in aIMFLDP. We are therefore prioritising the sites which are considered to be the both sustainable and viable to take forward.

As set out in 1.2.2 'Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy', the [Opportunity Cromarty Firth^{\(55\)}](#) project presents a range of major opportunities for Highland. We will be considering the particular potential benefits for Invergordon itself in more detail but we anticipate it would help attract significant inward investment, support new and existing businesses, create new job opportunities and drive the wider regeneration of the town.

Placemaking Priorities

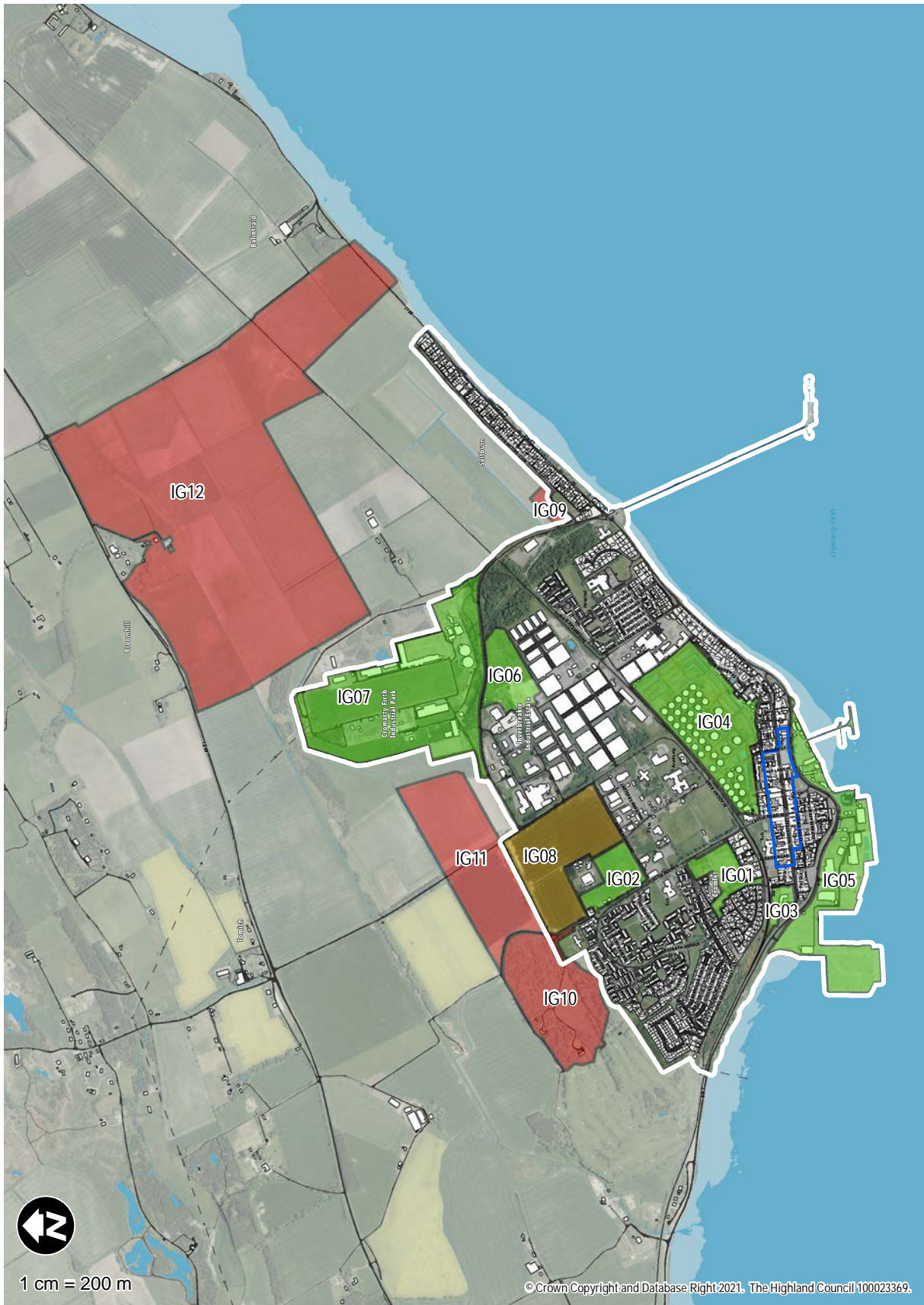
- Consolidate the town with growth focused on brownfield development and rounding off sites.
- Improve the public realm along the B817 and connections between the harbour area and the High Street to enhance the visitor experience and links with the local community.
- Redevelopment and regenerate under utilised brownfield sites within the central area of the town.

55 <https://opportunitycromartyfirth.co.uk/>

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

- Support further business and industrial expansion at allocated and established employment sites.
- Continue to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre to better attract visitors such as those from cruise ships and travelling on the NC500.
- Work with Transport Scotland to explore options and deliver improvements to the Tomich Junction.

Map 3.18



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

IG01

Name: Cromlet

Use(s): Housing

IG02

Name: Invergordon Mains (First Phase)

Use(s): Housing

IG03

Name: Land south west of Railway Station

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Business, Community)

IG04

Name: Disused fuel tank farm

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community, Industry)

IG05

Name: Invergordon Harbour

Use(s): Industry

IG06

Name: Inverbreakie Industrial Estate

Use(s): Industry

IG07

Name: Cromarty Firth Industrial Estate

Use(s): Industry

The site at Cromlet is being taken forward because of its relatively central location and, due to it being in Council ownership, its availability for development is confirmed. The proposed extension is supported as it will help ensure the adjoining greenspace enhanced as part of the development.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Land at Invergordon Mains Farm forms a logical medium to long term expansion of the town but the scale is greater than what is forecast to be required at present. Given the economic regeneration potential of the Opportunity Cromarty Firth project, it may justify allocating more land to ensure there are opportunities for growth within the shorter term.

Land south west of the railway station is a prominent, underutilised site which if redeveloped could form an important gateway into the town centre. Our preference is therefore to allocate it for a mix of uses.

The disused fuel tank farm is preferred as progress is being made to remove the tanks and redevelop the site. Although it is not certain as to how and when the site will come forward for development, a masterplan will likely be required to address site-wide issues and maximise regeneration opportunities.

Our preference is also to allocate land at Invergordon Harbour, Inverbreakie Industrial Estate and Cromarty Firth Industrial Estate for industrial uses to support further growth of the sites and attract additional economic activity to the area.

Alternative Sites

IG08

Name: Invergordon Mains (Later Phases) **Use(s):** Housing

Due to low levels of housing pressure since the adoption of the existing plan, we are only preferring the first phase of development at Invergordon Mains. The rest of the site forms part of the longer term strategy for Invergordon with the later phases shown as Alternative.

Non-Preferred Sites

IG09

Name: Ault Sallan Road **Use(s):** Housing

IG10

Name: House of Rosskeen **Use(s):** Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IG11

Name: Invergordon Mains North

Use(s): Mixed Use (Homes, Retail, Community)

IG12

Name: Delny

Use(s): Industry

Due to the lower levels of predicted growth we think that the sites closest to the centre of the settlement should be taken forward. Sites including the land at Ault Sallan Road, House of Rosskeen and north of Invergordon Mains are all relatively distant from key facilities and better alternatives exist. As a result we are presenting them as non-preferred.

The site at Delny is not preferred as the specific proposal which led to the land being allocated in the existing plan dissolved shortly after the adoption.

3.20 Inverness | Inbhir Nis

The city of Inverness is the major administrative, employment and service centre for the Highland region, and is commonly referred to as the "Capital of the Highlands". It is the most populated settlement and has seen a continued focus on major urban expansion in recent decades.

The combined advantages of its ideal location for easy access to the abundant outdoor opportunities and other highland and islands destinations and its offer of modern city living make it an attractive place to live, work and do business.

Pressure for growth continues as it expands its offer of attractions as a modern, growing city, with strong transport links for all modes. Around 290 homes are built per year in the city (10 year average), which dominates delivery of housing in Highland, making up 29% of all homes built in the region (based on 2018 HNDA data).

Some of the housing delivered, particularly over the last decade, has created communities that are disproportionately dependent on the private car for making everyday journeys due to the location of these developments and the nature of their design. These neighbourhoods have typically been dominated by road-centred layouts which prioritise driving as the primary mode of travel, over walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport. The result of such an approach, as well as environmental and health, are adverse impacts on the quality and sense of place. This approach has occurred in a relatively small urban city where active travel and public transport should be the logical travel choices. These factors, coupled with the delivery of out of town retail development, have resulted in driving tending to dominate people's travel choices, even for shorter day to day trips, which contributes to increasing vehicles on the network and therefore congestion. In addition, the expansion of out of town retail development continues to impact on the city centre, which presents challenges when competing with car-based retail and maintaining its role as the vibrant and vital core of the city and region.

Infrastructure to support communities in Inverness is under pressure from the levels of growth being delivered. Major expansion of the city, including the delivery of much-needed affordable housing, is dependent on the Council committing funds from its Capital Programme to deliver infrastructure required to support new communities. For example, the preferred and long-established strategy for expansion of the city to the east is dependent on increasing education capacity through the delivery of new schools. Schools across the city are experiencing capacity issues, and work is underway to tackle these demands, including seeking financial support from developers to mitigate the impacts of their developments. Doctors' surgeries are also commonly reported in local media as being under increasing pressure due to capacities, suitability of premises and staffing. The Council is currently working with NHS Highland on the future of primary healthcare provision in Inverness. New infrastructure has been identified in recent Plan documents, such as

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

the Inverness East Development Brief, which identifies land for new schools, a doctor's practice and public parks and open space as well as a protocol for developers to contribute to funding the delivery of this infrastructure. We think that such an approach is the best way to support growth of the city, will ensure that communities are supported by the infrastructure they need and, it will give infrastructure providers, such as the Council, the confidence about where to target limited funds to address pressures of new development. Improving digital connectivity combined with the impacts of the pandemic will mean that working from home is a viable option for many City employees.

We already coordinate the development of the City's largest expansion areas and regeneration sites via a range of development briefs. These vary in age, content and relevance, with some areas that are covered nearly fully built out. To ensure these documents remain the key driving force for the forward planning of the city, they will be reviewed and incorporated into the Local Development Plan at Proposed Plan stage, with those considered no longer relevant removed. It is proposed that the following approach be used:

Inverness Development Briefs

The following Development Briefs are proposed to be prepared or reviewed and carried forward in IMF2, and incorporated as new policies in the Plan at Proposed Plan stage:

- Inshes and Raigmore Development Brief.
- Inverness City Centre Development Brief.
- Inverness East Development Brief.
- Longman Landfill Development Brief.
- Muirtown and South Kessock Development Brief.
- Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief.

The following Development Briefs are proposed to be superseded by IMF2 and therefore archived as historic documents only:

- A96 Growth Corridor Development Framework.
- Firthview-Woodside Development Brief.
- Hedgefield, Inverness Development Brief.
- Inshes and Milton of Leys Development Brief.
- Longman Core Development Brief.
- Ness Development Brief.

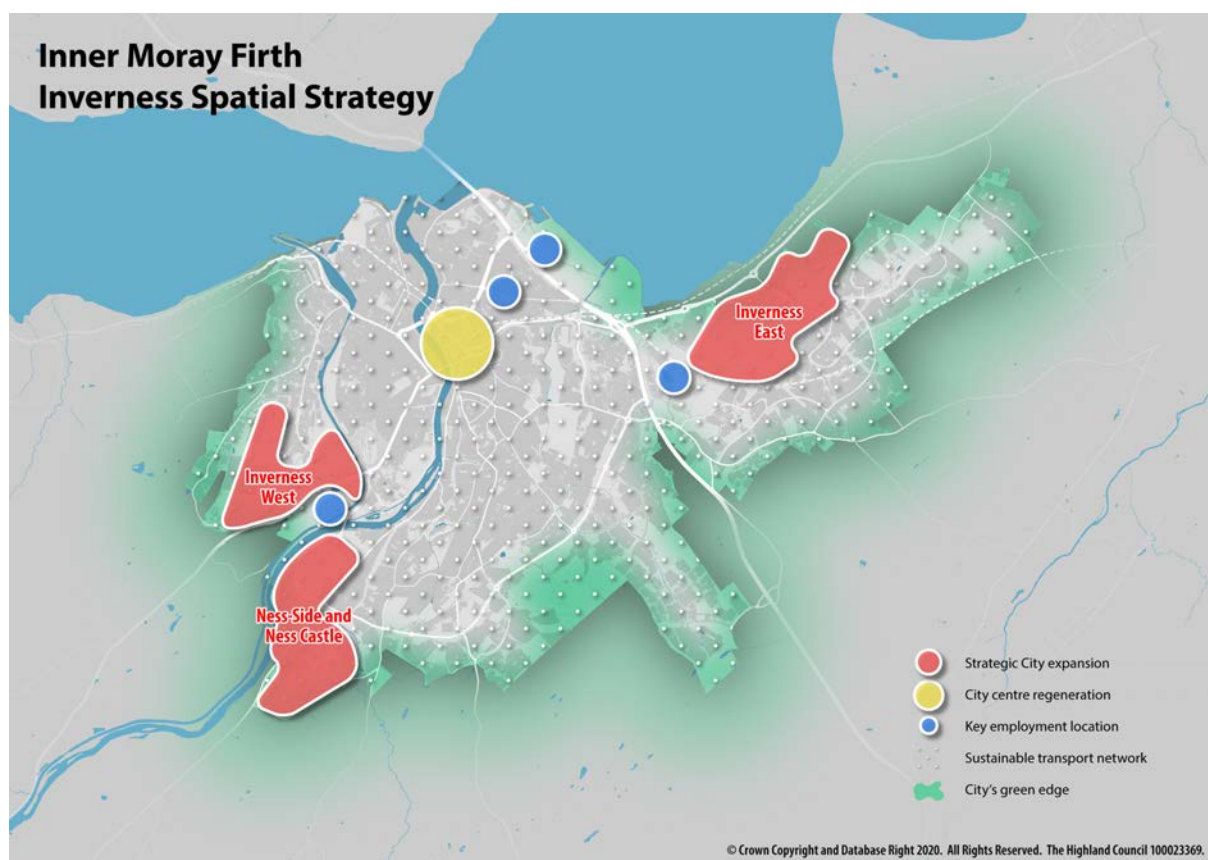
In terms of the Plan's contribution to the City's economic recovery, we have identified a range of employment land opportunities in sustainable and economically viable locations. Within the industrial property market, there is a relatively old stock of premises but demand remains high. Occupancy is increasing and, with limited choice, many occupiers "make do" with what is available. A large proportion of this stock is likely to become obsolete over the next 10 - 20 years. This poses

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

a risk to the area's future industrial competitiveness and could restrict economic growth. Work is currently underway to redevelop the former Longman landfill site for business and industrial uses, however, this is not expected to provide the single solution due to land contamination and licensing issues limiting extent of development within the lifetime of the Plan. There is therefore a pressing need to ensure enough land is identified in the Plan for industrial use. Within several of the city districts new industrial sites are suggested, based on a high-level assessment of potential sites. This includes land at Torvean Quarry, Inverness Campus Phase 3, Longman Landfill, and the option of densifying land in the existing Longman Industrial Estate.

The spatial strategy for the city needs to ensure that future development delivers sustainable places where people can make genuine choices about how to move around, are supported by good facilities, services and employment opportunities that are easily accessible. We have proposed a new Spatial Strategy for Inverness - Map 3.19 'Inverness City Spatial Strategy' - that reflects the Placemaking Priorities for the City. Once the Plan is adopted, it is proposed that all future development applications in Inverness will be assessed against these city-wide priorities and spatial strategy, as well as those for the city district within which the proposal is located.

Map 3.19 Inverness City Spatial Strategy



City-wide Placemaking Priorities

- Support the regeneration of Inverness City Centre by directing footfall-generating uses there first and limit further out of town retail development.
- Celebrate the City centre as a core of living, working and leisure destinations for the Highland region.
- Deliver the City's housing needs in strategic expansion areas so that services and infrastructure can be effectively planned and delivered.
- Focus housing development within places that reduce the need to travel and where it is easy to walk, wheel, cycle or use public transport to reverse the trend of car-dependent suburban housing development.
- Bolster existing neighbourhood service centres and employment destinations by ensuring new development is conveniently located and well connected with them.
- Prioritise transport improvements that get more people walking, cycling and using public transport.
- Safeguard and enhance the green networks that run through the City and those that surround it.

3.20.1 West Inverness

This district hosts significant landscape assets that are defining features of the city, including the western riverfront of the Ness, the Caledonian Canal and the rising slopes of Craig Phadraig, Dunain Hill and Torvean Esker. Together, these features make up the limiting features for development and provide the west and southwestern wooded and farmed backcloth of the city, important both to its setting and character. We think this is an appropriate approach to manage development because, together with coastal flood risk, these features present landscape, visual, physical and environmental limits to further development.

Major development has been and will continue to be delivered in this area, focused on housing at Westercraigs, replacement sports and other facilities at Torvean, and the West Link transport project.

Key issues for this district include the need to extend and enhance supporting infrastructure networks. Waste water and digital connections require extension and, perhaps most significantly, schools are forecast to experience capacity issues, for example Kinmylies Primary School is predicted to reach 113% of its capacity by 2024/25. The [Care and Learning Service](#)⁽⁵⁶⁾ is responsible for managing the school estate and a range of projects are identified in the [IMF1 Delivery Programme](#)⁽⁵⁷⁾ that seek to address these issues. We believe that the optimum solution to address these capacity issues would be the delivery of a new 3-18 campus at Charleston Academy, which is identified as a preferred site in this document. Coupled with land identified at Torvean North, these sites provide two opportunities to address capacity issues in this part of the City.

Key development sites in this district will help to deliver the overarching spatial strategy and placemaking priorities for the City, as shown by the preferences in this Main Issues Report.

Placemaking Priorities

- Support the completion of the Westercraigs City expansion area, including sensitive redevelopment of Craig Dunain Hospital.
- Promote the regeneration of Muirtown and South Kessock into vibrant mixed use neighbourhoods centred on new canal destinations that serve locals and visitors to the City.
- Encourage the creation of more walkable communities by supporting infill development in existing neighbourhoods.

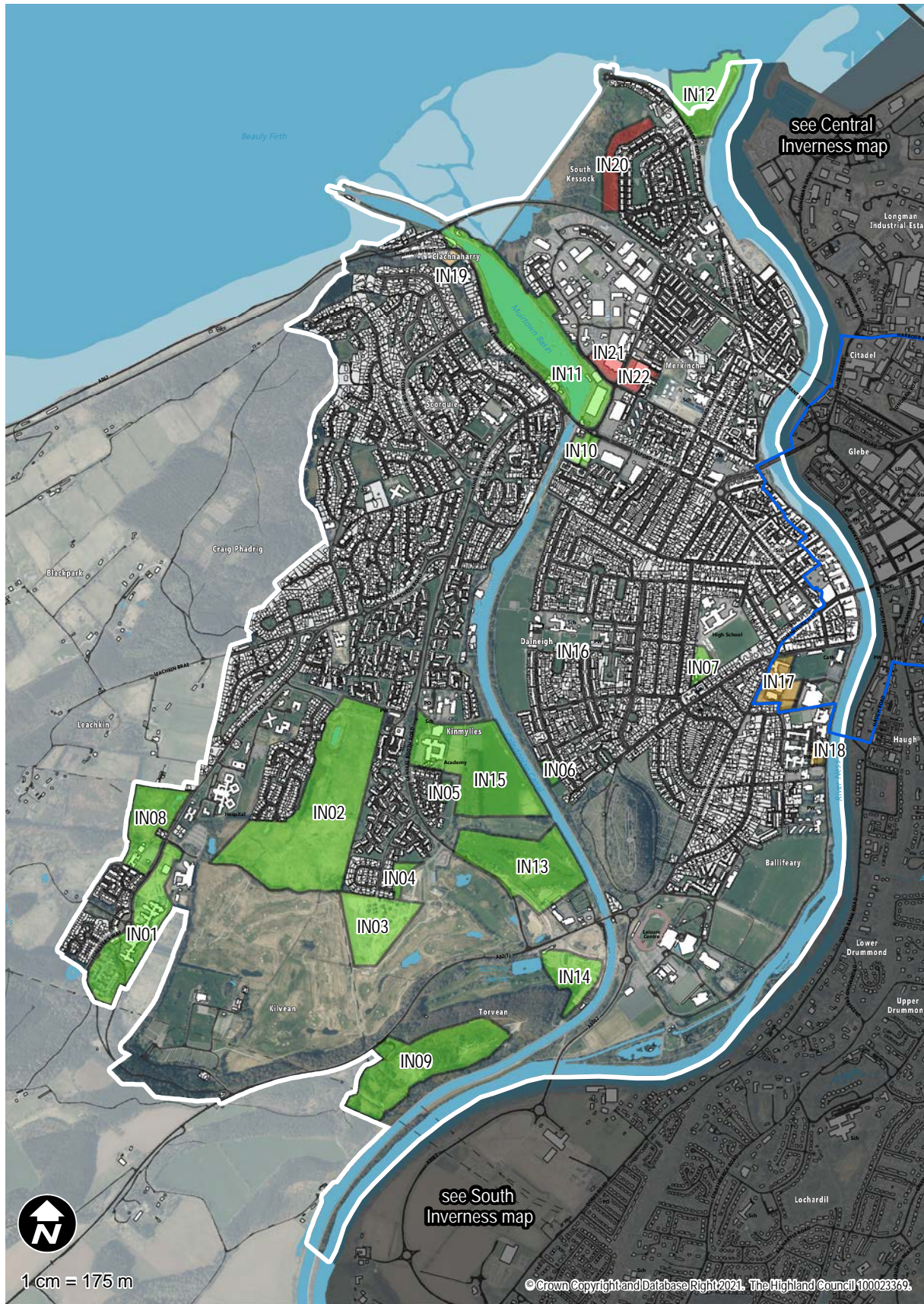
56 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council_information_performance_and_statistics/387/council_structure/2

57 https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans/809/delivery_programmes

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

- Promote redevelopment of the former Torvean Golf Course as a new City destination with parks and open space and new leisure, retail and food and drink destinations that celebrate the Caledonian Canal.
- Safeguard the setting of the City in the west and south west afforded by the wooded and farmed slopes by restricting development to the current built up area of Westercraigs, Kinmylies and Scorguie.

Map 3.20 West Inverness



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

IN01

Name: Westercraigs South

Use(s): Housing

IN02

Name: East of Stornoway Drive

Use(s): Housing

IN03

Name: South of Golfview Road

Use(s): Housing

IN04

Name: East of Golfview Road

Use(s): Housing

IN05

Name: East of Charleston View

Use(s): Housing

IN06

Name: West of St Valery Avenue

Use(s): Housing

IN07

Name: East of Dochfour Drive

Use(s): Housing

IN08

Name: Westercraigs North

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail)

IN09

Name: Torvean Quarry

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Business, Industry)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN10

Name: East of Muirtown Locks

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Business)

IN11

Name: Muirtown Basin

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business, Tourism, Leisure)

IN12

Name: Merkinch Shore

Use(s): Community

IN13

Name: Torvean North

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community (Education), Greenspace)

IN14

Name: Torvean South

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Leisure, Office, Business, Retail, Housing (limited to one bedroom homes))

IN15

Name: Charleston Campus

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community (Education), Greenspace)

The preferred sites will enable the completion of the Westercraigs City expansion area, including new development, transport links and a new retail opportunity that will improve facilities for local people and help to create more sustainable, walkable neighbourhoods. A focus on redevelopment at Muirtown Basin will support the regeneration of this area as well as new sites that can deliver new homes in sustainable locations. Land allocated in the southern part of the district will support community ambitions to create new uses for Torvean Quarry and to support the Council's vision to create a new gateway to the City and the Great Glen. Land preferred at Charleston Academy and Torvean North provide options to address existing and future forecast school capacity issues within the district.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Alternative Sites

IN16

Name: Dalneigh Primary School

Use(s): Housing

IN17

Name: Highland Council Headquarters

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

IN18

Name: UHI Riverside

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Leisure)

IN19

Name: Clachnaharry Quarry

Use(s): Housing

All but one of the above alternative sites are allocated for development within the approved development plan. However, no development has commenced during the last 5 years for a variety of reasons, most notably the respective landowners have not sought development. We therefore don't consider that they will provide viable development sites over the next 5-10 years and therefore suggest that they are not carried forward. The newly suggested site at Dalneigh Primary School would result in loss of local green space and is not supported for that reason. However, it could deliver affordable housing close to facilities and therefore views are invited on its acceptability to the local community.

Non-Preferred Sites

IN20

Name: North West of Carnac Crescent

Use(s): Housing

IN21

Name: West of Glendoe Terrace

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Leisure, Retail)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN22

Name: East of Glendoe Terrace

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Leisure, Retail)

Recent community engagement resulted in expressed local community opposition to development at Carnac Crescent on the grounds of loss of green space. Redevelopment of land near Glendoe Terrace may not be acceptable due to coastal flood risk.

3.20.2 South Inverness

The northwest-facing slopes of the city are made up of agricultural land, Fairways Golf Course, Leys Castle Designed Landscape and Daviot Wood. These assets mark the limiting features to development. They provide the green network connections and undeveloped green backcloth that help to define the setting and character of the city and provide the entrance to more remote countryside to the south. We think these are appropriate characteristics to use to limit the extent of development to the south and south west of the city.

The district is predominantly made up of established and more recent residential neighbourhoods. The area south of what is commonly referred to as the southern distributor road has accommodated significant planned suburban housing development in recent decades, taking advantage of the attractive aspect looking across the Beauly and Moray Firths. However, this has resulted in some neighbourhoods being dependent on cars to make everyday journeys, due to the steep slopes, low density of development and remoteness of neighbourhoods from major employment and other destinations. Car-based retail dominates the retail and service offer, which is mainly located along the southern distributor road.

Strategic city expansion sites at Ness-side and Ness Castle are active and will continue to deliver a significant number of homes to meet current and future demands. Other sites across the district will enable the consolidation and completion of previous strategic expansion areas at Slackbuie, Inshes and Milton of Leys.

Redevelopment of the Raigmore Hospital site, including a new public transport connection into Raigmore housing estate; completion of the Inshes District Park; delivery of a new Primary School at Ness Castle, and expansion of facilities at Milton of Leys Primary School will help to meet employment and community needs for the district and city.

Originally these neighbourhoods and the commercial facilities spread along the Southern Distributor Road were largely designed for car-based travel. It is now necessary to retrofit these areas, via application of our new approach to Placemaking approach explained in the Main Issues section of this document and Placemaking Priorities for Inverness, to ensure that existing communities and future ones are sustainable in terms of reducing carbon footprint and creating or improving communities where most day to day needs can be met within walking distance, or by using quality, frequent bus services.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

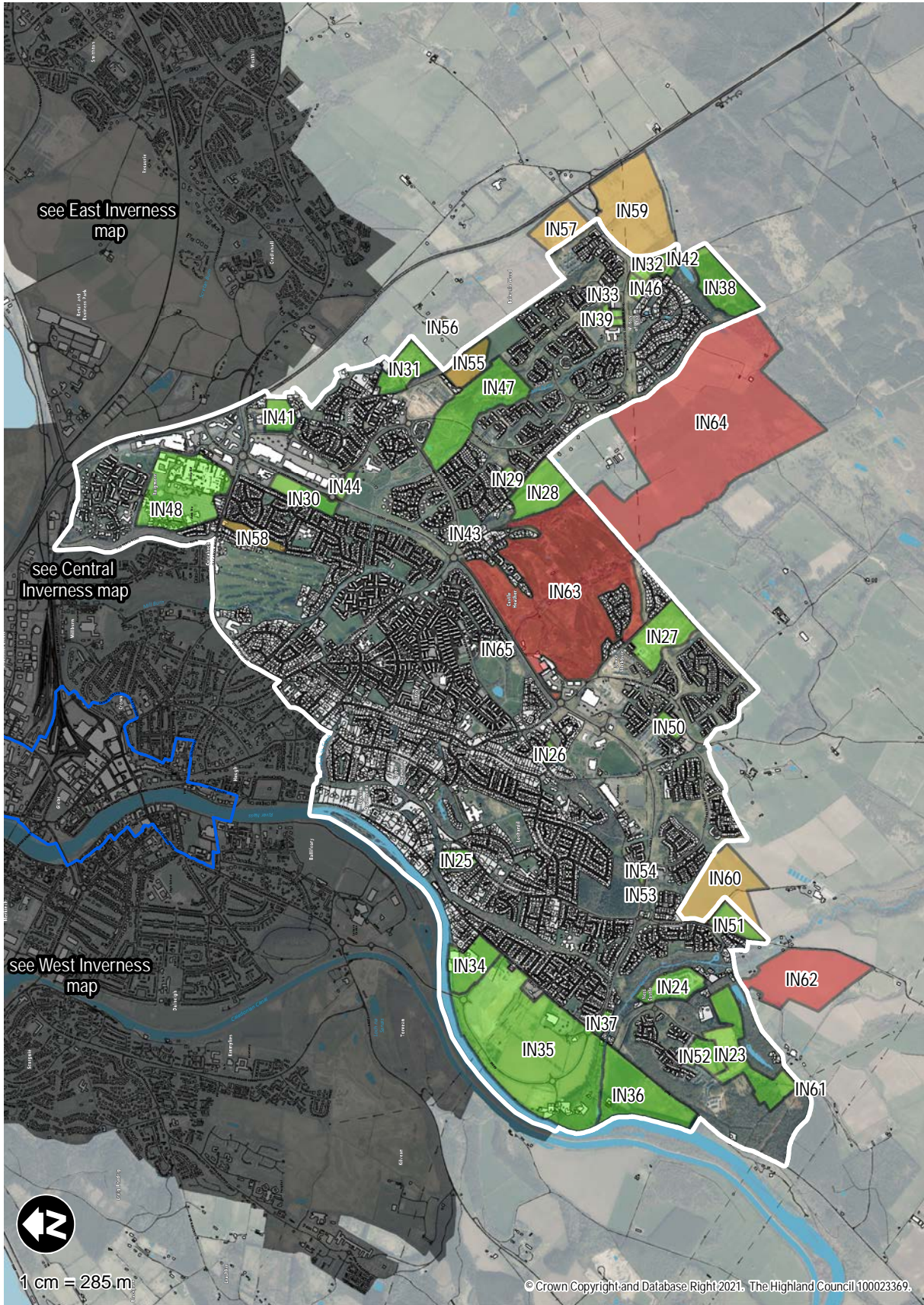
Limited existing and likely future infrastructure capacity notably in schools is a common theme across all City districts but some short term solutions have been identified and land allocated for a new primary school to serve Ness-side and Ness Castle plus a nursery "extension" at Milton of Leys. Other investment supported by the Plan includes: a new public transport connection from Raigmore Hospital into Raigmore housing estate and completion of the Inshes District Park.

The strategic expansion sites described above will help to deliver the overarching spatial strategy and placemaking priorities for the city, as shown by the preferences in this Main Issues Report.

Placemaking Priorities

- Support the long-term strategy of delivering new, sustainable city expansions at Ness-side and Ness Castle.
- Encourage more sustainable, walkable communities by delivering neighbourhood services and facilities, as well as housing, in central locations where it is easy to move around by active modes (walking, wheeling and cycling).
- Support the delivery of improved active travel and public transport provision by ensuring higher density development, where appropriate.
- Safeguard the character and setting of the City to the south by limiting further expansion upslope.

Map 3.21 South Inverness



Sites

Preferred Sites

IN23

Name: Ness Castle South

Use(s): Housing

IN24

Name: Ness Castle East

Use(s): Housing

IN25

Name: Drummond Hill

Use(s): Housing

IN26

Name: Culduthel Place

Use(s): Housing

IN27

Name: Earl's Gate

Use(s): Housing

IN28

Name: Druids Temple

Use(s): Housing

IN29

Name: Parks Farm

Use(s): Housing

IN30

Name: Sir Walter Scott Drive

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN31

Name: Inshes Small Holdings

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN32

Name: North East of Castleton Village **Use(s):** Housing

IN33

Name: Milton of Leys Centre **Use(s):** Housing

IN34

Name: Ness-side (North) **Use(s):** Housing, Greenspace

IN35

Name: Ness-side (Central) **Use(s):** Housing, Greenspace

IN36

Name: Ness-side (South) **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Care Home)

IN37

Name: North of Holm Burn **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

IN38

Name: Bogbain West **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

IN39

Name: Milton of Leys Centre (North) **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Care Home)

IN40

Name: East of Milton of Leys Primary School **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail)

IN41

Name: Dell of Inshes **Use(s):** Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN42

Name: North of Redwood Avenue

Use(s): Business

IN43

Name: Old Edinburgh Road South

Use(s): Mixed Use (Retail, Community, Business)

IN44

Name: Land at Inshes Road

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Housing, Retail, Business)

IN45

Name: Milton of Leys Centre East

Use(s): Mixed Use (Retail, Business)

IN46

Name: North of Castleton Village

Use(s): Community

IN47

Name: Inshes District Park

Use(s): Community

IN48

Name: Raigmore Hospital

Use(s): Hospital

IN49

Name: Milton of Leys Primary School

Use(s): Community (Education)

IN50

Name: Slackbuie Pitches

Use(s): Community

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN51	
Name: Knocknagael West	Use(s): Community (Allotments)
<hr/>	
IN52	
Name: Ness Castle Primary School	Use(s): Community (Education)
<hr/>	
IN53	
Name: Culduthel Avenue West	Use(s): Retail (Funeral Home)
<hr/>	
IN54	
Name: Culduthel Avenue East	Use(s): Retail
<hr/>	

Approved development plan allocations and extant planning permissions support the reallocation of most of the preferred sites. These will complete part-established neighbourhoods and provide additional community, commercial and employment facilities.

Alternative Sites

IN55	
Name: Wester Inshes Farm South	Use(s): Housing
<hr/>	
IN56	
Name: Balvonie of Inshes	Use(s): Business
<hr/>	
IN57	
Name: East of Balvonie Braes	Use(s): Community
<hr/>	
IN58	
Name: Drakies House	Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)
<hr/>	

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN59

Name: Milton of Leys South

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community)

IN60

Name: Knocknagael East

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

These sites are shown as alternative rather than preferred because some are of a scale that would significantly increase the amount of people dependent on car travel for everyday journeys; some have uncertainty over their viability to provide for the city's development needs and some, despite being allocated for more than five years in the adopted plan, have not come forward for development. Land at Milton of Leys South has been demonstrated not to be a viable business site, being allocated for such use for the lifetime of the adopted plan. Should other, preferred sites prove not to provide an effective housing land supply for the next 20 years, this site could provide an alternative housing site, and views are sought on this option. Land at Knocknagael is adjacent to community land that provides for local food growing on relatively good quality agricultural land and the local community is actively seeking to secure this site for expansion of such uses. It is not in walking, wheeling or cycling distance of most services or facilities and therefore its development for housing could give rise to an increase in car-based living. However, it is in public ownership and is relatively free of infrastructure constraints. Should other, preferred sites prove not to provide an effective housing land supply for the next 20 years, this site could offer an alternative, and views are therefore sought on this option, including the mix of uses that should be considered to make it a successful place.

Non-Preferred Sites

IN61

Name: Torbreck

Use(s): Housing

IN62

Name: Torbreck East

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN63

Name: Fairways Golf Course

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Office, Retail)

IN64

Name: Welltown of Leys

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community (Education))

IN65

Name: Castle Heather Drive

Use(s): Housing

The non-preferred sites are not supported because some are of a scale that would take strategic growth of the city in a new, unsustainable direction; some are too distant from existing services, facilities and major employment destinations, and some would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the setting and character of the city, as well as resulting in the loss of publicly accessible green space.

3.20.3 Central Inverness

This district covers the city centre, the Longman Industrial Estate and the neighbourhoods of Crown, Haugh and Kingsmills. It is the heart of the city and region and serves as a centre of commercial, administrative and transport activities.

Significant focus continues on the revitalisation of the city centre as a vibrant multi-functioning place to live, work and visit. During the lifetime of the last plan key regeneration sites have been the focus of development activity: Midmills Campus residential development and artists studios, demolition of Longman College and construction of the new Justice Centre nearby, commencement of development of a hotel on the site of the open two-storey car park on Rose Street, and commencement of the redevelopment of the former swimming pool site at Glebe Street into a hotel; planned regeneration of Inverness Rail Station, the Victorian Market and various other public realm and travel improvement projects.

Central to the city centre strategy for tourism, a cornerstone of the Highland economy, is the creation of a major new tourist attraction at Inverness Castle. The relocation of the Scottish Courts Service to the new Longman Justice Centre has opened up the opportunity to create a modern facility that complements other city centre attractions and draws in visitors. Temporary COVID-19 measures have demonstrated that the transport network can continue to function, whilst more space can be shared for people walking, wheeling and cycling in these major footfall-attracting areas.

A range of other key opportunities are either planned or have been realised in recent years that aim to get people living back in the city centre. Such an approach contributes to improving the district's vibrancy and vitality and provides opportunities for sustainable living, working and leisure. This theme remains a key priority and as such land is identified to support city centre living, employment uses and diversity of other uses and attractions on offer in the heart of the Highland capital, a key component of which will be establishing new, and enhancing existing connections with the city's coastline from the River Ness downstream to the Moray Firth.

Elsewhere, most land is previously developed so opportunities are limited to refurbishment, redevelopment, remediation or reclamation. This reuse of land in a central and connected location is environmentally sustainable but raises infrastructure capacity issues, albeit projects such as the planned upgrade of the A9/A82 junction will increase development potential, in terms of vehicular traffic. Key regeneration opportunities are also identified at the prison, the former landfill site and the harbour, which may be constrained by the coastal and river environment it is located within.

These strategic projects and vision for the city centre are reflected in the Placemaking Priorities and site preferences below which will help to deliver the overarching spatial strategy for the city.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Placemaking Priorities

- Consolidate the city centre and prioritise urban living through strategic expansion of residential-led mixed use development to the north (Longman Phase 1) and reuse/repurposing of existing buildings (e.g. empty and under utilised floorspace above retail units), while safeguarding retail, food and drink and business opportunities.
- Increase employment opportunities by supporting redevelopment of existing buildings for office, business, healthcare and community uses.
- Support diversification of the economy, including the creation of new and unique visitor and leisure attractions, including Inverness Harbour expansion, which make best use of existing assets and improve the urban environment.
- Embed walking and cycling as the logical choice and easiest way to make every journeys, including delivering active travel and public realm improvements across the city centre.
- Meet regional and local industrial land supply needs at the former Longman landfill site.
- Harness the district's built and cultural heritage assets to ensure the area is distinctive and attractive.

Map 3.22 Central Inverness



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

IN66

Name: Diriebught Depot

Use(s): Housing

IN67

Name: Porterfield Prison

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Tourism)

IN68

Name: Inverness Central

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

IN69

Name: Inverness Castle and Bridge Street

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community, Tourism)

IN70

Name: Glebe Street

Use(s): Mixed Use (Hotel, Business, Leisure)

IN71

Name: Shore Street City Centre Expansion

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Industry, Community)

IN72

Name: Harbour Gate

Use(s): Mixed Use (Port, Marine, Commercial, Cultural, Tourism)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN73

Name: Former Longman Landfill

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Industry, Temporary Stop Site for Travelling People)

IN74

Name: Former Longman Landfill East

Use(s): Industry

IN75

Name: Stadium Road West

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business, Industry)

IN76

Name: Stadium Road East

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Industry)

All of the preferred sites are previously developed or involve reclamation and therefore represent an efficient use of "brownfield" land. In most cases the list of supported uses are more viable and/or more needed than the current use(s) of the land or buildings and will help central Inverness regenerate and revitalise. Coastal and fluvial flood risk issues may affect the suggested expansion at the harbour and this will need to be assessed and debated through the Plan process in partnership with SEPA and SNH as more definitive development proposals emerge.

Alternative Sites

IN77

Name: Cameron Barracks

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Housing, Tourism, Community)

IN78

Name: Millburn Road South

Use(s): Retail

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

This district's two alternative sites are currently allocated within the approved plan but are now thought to be unlikely to be available for significant development within the next 5 to 10 years and are therefore not supported for retention.

Non-Preferred Sites

IN79

Name: Millburn Road North

Use(s): Retail

Similarly, land north of Millburn Road is in an existing bulky goods retail use, is not considered suitable, in sustainable travel terms, as a location for smaller scale unrestricted retail development use which should be located within an established city or district centre.

3.20.4 East Inverness

This district is defined by the Inner Moray Firth waterbody to the north, the settled agricultural landscapes to the east, and the wooded and farmed slopes to the south. These assets form the limiting features to development for this part of the city. We think these are appropriate assets to use to define the limits to development, coupled with steeper upper slopes, fluvial flood risk, the Highland Mainline Railway, the A96 and the proximity to the Culloden Battlefield site.

Historic development east of the A9 trunk road in Culloden, Smithton, Westhill and Cradlehall has established the residential role of the east of the city. A range of local-scale facilities and employment are present but most major employment and service opportunities are more than 1km distant, which has led to a dependence on cars for moving around. Recent investment at Inverness Campus has enabled the delivery of public transport and active travel links over the A9 and Highland Mainline railway and further investment is planned to connect this district, including to the city centre.

Major Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal funds are committed in the area through the East Link road project, which is at an advanced stage of planning, will unlock the opportunity to realise the long-established spatial strategy to expand the city at Stratton and Ashton Farms, which has an up to date Development Brief in the aIMFLDP.

Key development sites are already active, including at Stratton, with other major sites offering potential to deliver much needed affordable and open market housing, such as the consented Balloch Farm site.

Similar to the rest of the city, education capacity is limited in this district. The delivery of housing will depend on public support to contribute to funding new primary and secondary school capacity which, coupled with existing committed transport investment, will unlock this strategic expansion area.

Other development opportunities include: diversifying uses at local neighbourhood centres to support more walkable communities; supporting the refurbishment and extension of Culloden Academy to address existing school capacity issues, and diversifying uses of HIE-owned land adjacent to Inverness retail park to address pressing needs for industrial use.

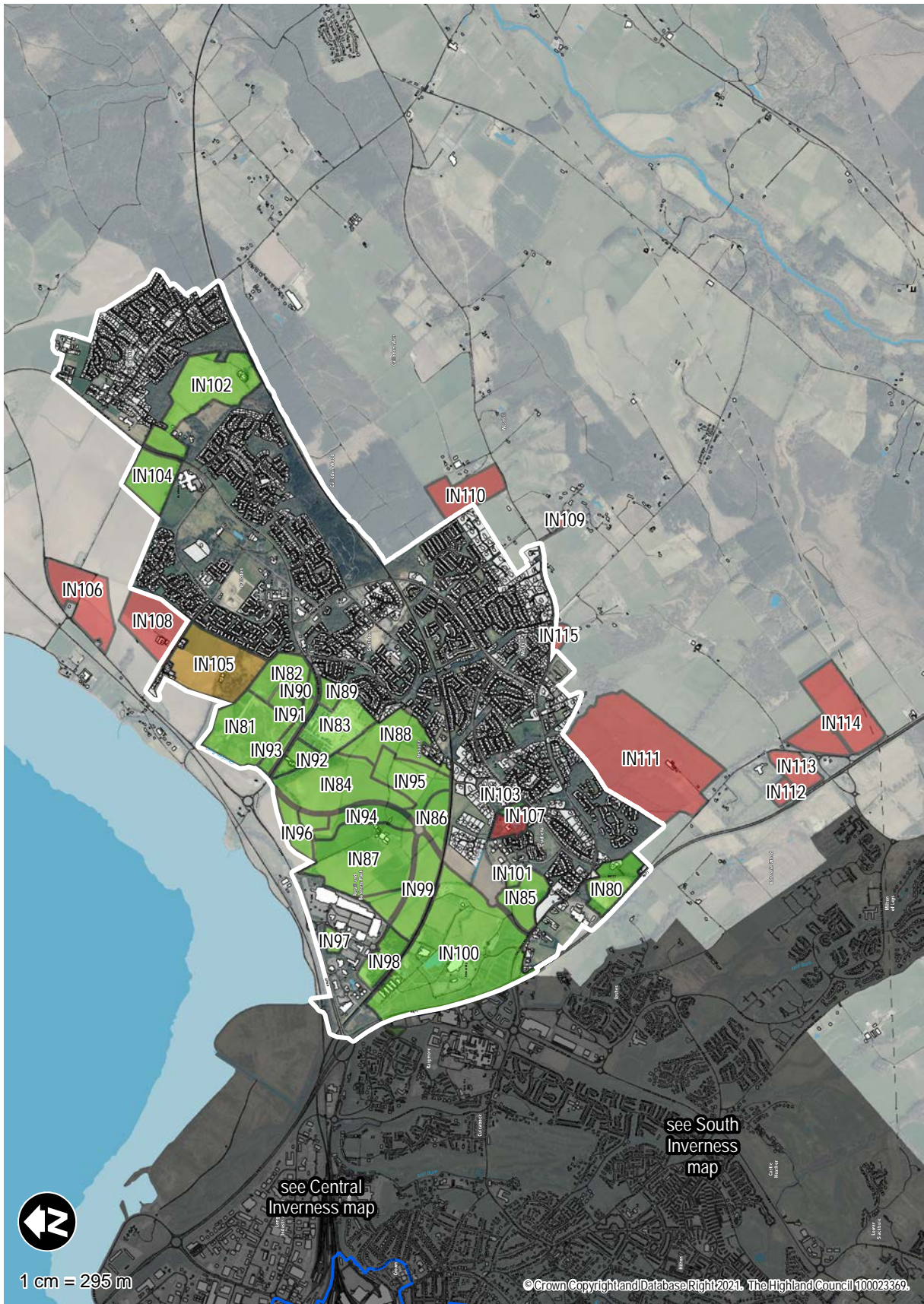
These key development sites will help to deliver the overarching spatial strategy and placemaking priorities for the city, as shown by the preferences in this Main Issues Report.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Placemaking Priorities

- Support the established strategy of delivering new sustainable city expansion at Ashton and Stratton farms.
- Support the diversification of uses at neighbourhood centres to achieve vibrant mixed-use employment and retail uses.
- Apply the Inverness East Development Brief to deliver modern, sustainable city expansion.
- Safeguard the green network, character and setting of the City by limiting development to the existing built edges of Culloden, Balloch, Westhill and Cradlehall.

Map 3.23 East Inverness



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

IN80

Name: Easterfield

Use(s): Housing

IN81

Name: Stratton North

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN82

Name: Stratton East

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN83

Name: Stratton South

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN84

Name: Ashton East

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN85

Name: Castlehill

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN86

Name: Ashton South

Use(s): Housing, Greenspace

IN87

Name: Ashton West

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community (Primary School), Business, Retail)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN88

Name: Ashton Central

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community (High School) Business, Retail)

IN89

Name: Stratton Central

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

IN90

Name: Stratton Health Centre

Use(s): Healthcare

IN91

Name: Stratton Primary School

Use(s): Community (Primary School)

IN92

Name: Stratton West

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail, Park and Ride)

IN93

Name: Stratton Park

Use(s): Community

IN94

Name: Ashton Park

Use(s): Community

IN95

Name: Ashton District Park

Use(s): Community

IN96

Name: Inverness East Recycling Centre

Use(s): Community (Recycling Centre)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN97

Name: Eastfield Way

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business)

IN98

Name: Highland Prison

Use(s): Prison

IN99

Name: Ashton Southwest

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business, Industry)

IN100

Name: Inverness Campus

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business, Community)

IN101

Name: Castlehill Road

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Office, Business)

IN102

Name: Balloch Farm

Use(s): Housing

IN103

Name: Cradlehall Court

Use(s): Mixed Use (Office, Business, Retail, Greenspace)

IN104

Name: Culloden Academy Extension

Use(s): Community (High School)

All of the preferred sites benefit from an extant planning permission and/or a development allocation in the approved development plan. Together they will promote the coordinated expansion of the eastern part of the City - i.e. with improved connectivity in particular by sustainable travel means and provision of facilities and employment opportunities more local to each neighbourhood and wider district.

Alternative Sites

IN105

Name: Milton of Culloden South

Use(s): Housing

Land at Milton of Culloden South, although allocated in the approved development plan, is in fragmented ownership and there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that it is a viable development site. Coupled with education capacity constraints within the wider district and the site's distance from the centre of the district, we do not support its retention in the emerging Plan unless its viability can be confirmed.

Non-Preferred Sites

IN106

Name: Inverness East Gateway

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Office, Business, Retail, Leisure)\

IN107

Name: Cradlehall Farm

Use(s): Housing

IN108

Name: West of Caulfield Road

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Office, Business, Retail)

IN109

Name: Northeast of Copperfield

Use(s): Housing

IN110

Name: West of Blackpark Farm

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Campsite)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

IN111

Name: Lower Muckovie Farm

Use(s): Housing

IN112

Name: Drumossie Brae

Use(s): Housing

IN113

Name: Drumossie

Use(s): Housing

IN114

Name: Easter Bogbain

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Office, Business, Community)

IN115

Name: The Tower

Use(s): Housing

Almost all of these sites have been non-preferred because some are more peripheral to the City's structure and facilities than the sites that have been preferred; some would result in new strategic directions for city expansion less sustainable than those preferred by this document and, some would encroach onto the undeveloped landscapes important to the character and setting of the city. The site at Cradlehall Farm raises site specific issues in terms of likely adverse impacts on woodland and access.

3.21 Kiltarlity | Cill Taraglain

Kiltarlity parish's main settlement at Allarburn has a dormitory function. Local employment opportunities, commercial facilities and public transport connectivity are all very limited. As such it is not a sustainable location for significant further growth. With an immediate village population of around 470, a constrained local road network and limited water supply and waste water treatment capacity, the settlement cannot support major future development without a similar increase in public investment and that level of investment would not be cost effective relative to investing in other areas. The parish church burial ground may reach capacity within the Plan period so we believe it would be prudent to safeguard land for its future extension.

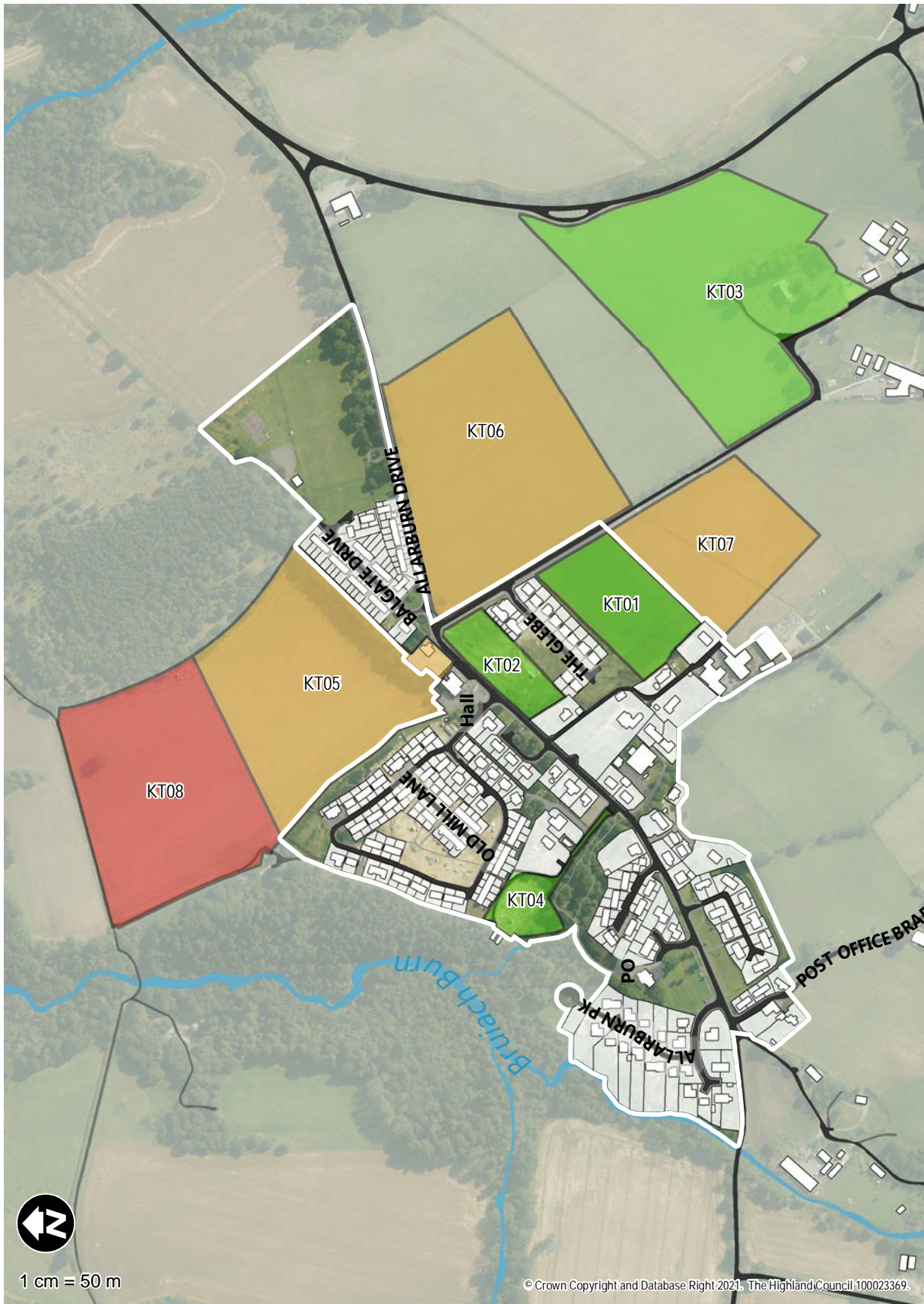
As such, we believe future development should be limited to completing sites that already benefit from allocation in the existing development plan and/or have planning permission. The local primary school and sewage works can accommodate this limited expansion.

Placemaking Priorities

- To consolidate Allarburn village as a compact hub of facilities to serve the wider parish catchment and to safeguard land for the expansion of the parish burial ground.
- To limit further housing development to the capacity of existing education, water and sewerage assets.
- To direct that development to the core of the settlement. Land at Glebe Farm is part developed, part serviced and close to the local primary school. There are other alternative development sites in close proximity to Kiltarlity's facilities but these would open up much larger development opportunities for which there is neither quantitative need nor servicing capacity.
- Mature woodland, amenity area and recreational pitch features surround and punctuate the village, are important to its character, and therefore merit protection.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.24



Sites

Preferred Sites

KT01

Name: Glebe Farm Phase 2

Use(s): Housing

KT02

Name: Glebe Farm Phase 1

Use(s): Community

KT03

Name: Kiltarlity Parish Church

Use(s): Community (Burial Ground Extension)

KT04

Name: Old Mill

Use(s): Business

Land at Glebe Farm is part developed, part serviced and close to the local primary school. The Old Mill is a brownfield redevelopment opportunity that could provide local opportunities. Additional lair capacity may be needed at the parish burial ground within the Plan period.

Alternative Sites

KT05

Name: North of Balgate Phase 1

Use(s): Housing

KT06

Name: South of Allarburn Drive

Use(s): Housing

KT07

Name: Glebe Farm Phase 3

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

These other alternative development sites are in close proximity to Kiltarlity's facilities but would open up much larger development opportunities for which there is neither quantitative need nor servicing capacity. KT05 and KT06 breach existing woodland and road village boundaries and would therefore set a precedent for further expansion.

Non-Preferred Sites

KT08

Name: North of Balgate Phase 2

Use(s): Housing

The later phase of potential development land north of the village hall would be outwith a reasonable walking distance from the village primary school.

3.22 Kirkhill | Cnoc Mhoire

With a permanent population of around 750, Kirkhill is a large village in Highland terms but has a largely dormitory function with local employment opportunities, commercial facilities and public transport connectivity all very limited. As such it is not a sustainable location for significant further growth. Its side road network is constrained, its primary school over capacity and its water supply and waste water treatment capacity limited. As such, the settlement cannot support major future development without a similar increase in public investment and that level of investment would not be cost effective relative to investing in other areas.

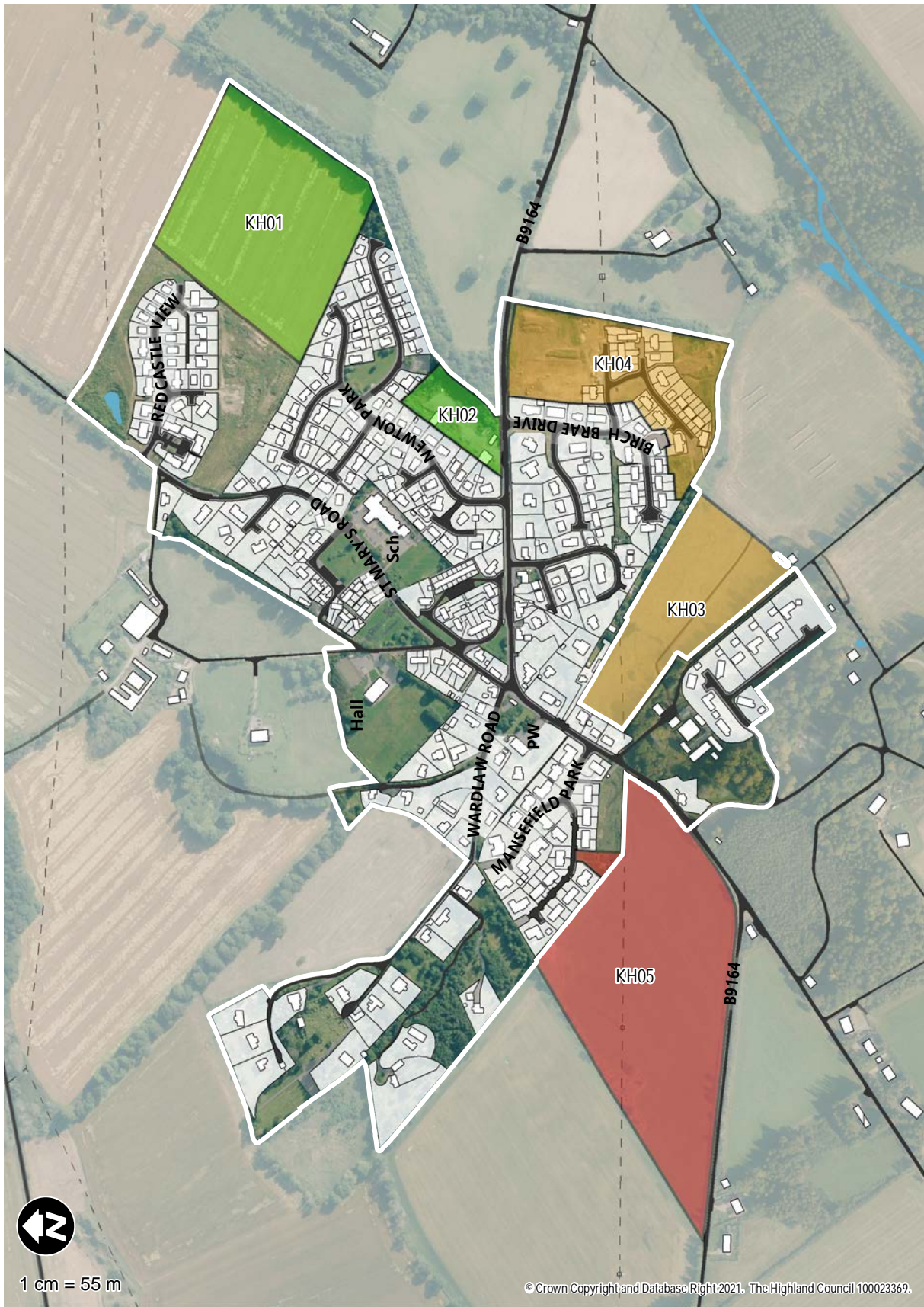
As such, we believe future development should be limited to completing sites that already benefit from allocation in the existing development plan and/or have planning permission. The local primary school, with a small extension, and sewage works can accommodate this limited expansion.

Placemaking Priorities

- To consolidate Kirkhill with new development closest to its facilities but to curtail larger, peripheral expansion.
- To limit further housing development to the capacity of education, water and sewerage assets.
- To direct that development to land at Groam Farm which is part developed, part serviced and close to the local primary school and is the optimum location for consolidating the village in a compact form.
- Mature woodland, amenity area and recreational pitch features surround and punctuate the village, are important to its character, and therefore merit protection.
- To seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of an active travel link between Kirkhill and both Beaully and Inverness.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.25 Kirkhill



Sites

Preferred Sites

KH01

Name: Groam Farm East

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

KH02

Name: Contractor's Yard

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business, Industry, Retail)

Land at Groam Farm is close to the local primary school and is already part serviced. The builder's yard is central to the community, has been underutilised for several years and would therefore benefit from redevelopment.

Alternative Sites

KH03

Name: Achnagairn

Use(s): Housing

KH04

Name: East of Birch Brae Drive

Use(s): Housing

Land at Achnagairn has been allocated for many years but has not come forward for development. Similarly, the housing development site on the south east edge of the village has been slow to build out and the small area that remains doesn't justify a specific allocation. Moreover, there is neither quantitative need nor servicing capacity for these sites in addition to the preferred sites.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Main Settlement Non-Preferred Sites

KH05

Name: Wester Kirkhill

Use(s): Housing

Land at Wester Kirkhill is more distant from and poorly connected to Kirkhill's facilities, affected by high voltage overhead pylons and in common with the other sites, good farmland.

3.23 Maryburgh | Baile Màiri

Maryburgh is a dormitory settlement with a resident population of 1,150. This population has seen a slight decline in recent years and few houses have been built locally. More positively, water and sewerage capacity is adequate to support further growth, landowners are prepared to make land available and there are few physical constraints that would inhibit development.

However, the village primary school has closed and the alternative at Conon Bridge is already over capacity, there are very few local job opportunities, no confirmed housebuilder interest in the settlement and the road network leading to the peripheral expansion site options is single track and difficult to widen.

Taking account of these development factors we do not believe that Maryburgh is a sustainable and viable location for significant future growth. Allocated land at Conon Bridge is closer to a larger shop, the primary school and a rail halt. One site with an existing planning permission should be reaffirmed at Maryburgh but otherwise major housing growth should be restricted. The project to enhance a community hub is worthy of reference.

Allocating land for local employment growth creates fewer sustainability issues in that local jobs could reduce the village's dependence on longer distance commuting. Land for industrial and business uses between the Dingwall Marts and the trunk road roundabout has been suggested for business and industrial development.

Placemaking Priorities

- To limit the scope for new housing development sites to the land that is least constrained and to local infrastructure capacity notably the new primary school.
- To explore the potential for expanding local employment opportunities by allocating land between the trunk road roundabout and the Dingwall Marts.
- To otherwise respect the trunk road, side road, woodland and flood risk constraints that inhibit expansion.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.26



Sites

Preferred Sites

MB01

Name: South of Former Primary School **Use(s):** Housing

MB02

Name: Land West of Maryburgh Roundabout **Use(s):** Housing

MB03

Name: Former Primary School **Use(s):** Community

MB04

Name: Land North of A835 Roundabout
(lower slopes) **Use(s):** Industry, Business

The land south of the former primary school benefits from a recent planning permission. There is also a community led proposal to refurbish/redevelop part of the former primary school site for a hub facility. Land north of the A835 roundabout has been suggested by the landowners for the development of employment facilities and we feel this suggestion merits discussion and assessment through this Plan process. Land west of the A835 roundabout offers the best prospect of a viable housing development.

Alternative Sites

MB05

Name: Maryburgh Expansion Site (North) **Use(s):** Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

MB06

Name: Maryburgh Expansion Site (South)

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community, Retail)

We no longer believe that Maryburgh is a suitable location for major housing growth. Apart from the site-specific constraints of multiple landownership, inadequate road access, and distance from supporting facilities, Maryburgh as a settlement is not a sustainable and viable location for growth. Given the reduced overall housing requirement across the Plan area and the availability of more viable and more sustainable location alternatives, including land closeby at Braes of Conon, we do not support the reallocation of these larger approved development plan sites and suggest that they be removed from the Plan.

Non-Preferred Sites

MB07

Name: Land North of A835 Roundabout
(upper slopes)

Use(s): Industry, Business

The upper slopes of the land north of the A835 roundabout are sensitive in visual and landscape terms and are therefore not supported for development.

3.24 Muir of Ord | Am Blàr Dubh

Muir of Ord has unusual characteristics for a Highland settlement being built on plentiful, relatively flat and relatively well drained land. Similarly, the town has few infrastructure constraints - water, sewage treatment and school capacities are adequate. This welcoming context has supported strong recent growth and the population is rising towards 3,000. Crucially, Muir of Ord has a good range of local facilities, local employment opportunities and an improving rail service connection. We therefore believe it is a sustainable location for further growth.

However, this growth should be subject to stepped improvements in infrastructure network capacities. Notably the local road network has particular pinch points which require resolution. Localised surface water drainage problems also inhibit development in particular parts of the settlement.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Taking account of these development factors we believe that this Plan should reallocate the majority of previously identified allocations except at Broomhill and Ord Hill where the previous permissions are almost complete and at Corrie Road where land has not come forward for development. Central land should be safeguarded for enhanced community facilities with better connections to adjoining housing areas.

Placemaking Priorities

- To support the continued growth of the town in locations that best support local facilities and promote sustainable travel patterns.
- To secure developer contributions to help resolve remaining infrastructure and facility deficiencies.
- To reallocate existing development sites near Lochan Corr and The Cairns because they are closest to facilities and offer the prospect of sustainable travel.
- To safeguard and enhance recreational facilities at the heart of the village.
- To seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of an active travel link between Windhill and Tarradale Mains, and also between Conon Bridge and Muir of Ord.

Sites

Preferred Sites

MO01

Name: Lochan Corr

Use(s): Housing

MO02

Name: Land to South of The Cairns

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business)

MO03

Name: Recreation and Leisure Areas

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Business)

MO04

Name: Glen Ord Distillery

Use(s): Industry

MO05

Name: East of Industrial Estate

Use(s): Industry

Land at Lochan Corr and South of The Cairns has firm development interest and are respectively, close to community facilities and employment opportunities. Central recreational facilities would benefit from safeguarding, possible reconfiguration to improve access to them and enhancement. Industrial areas on the margins of the town provide valuable local employment opportunities and their expansion should be supported subject to impact on adjoining uses.

Alternative Sites

MO06

Name: Corrie Road (East)

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Land at Corrie Road has been earmarked for development for several years but has not come forward for development and requires significant developer funded road access improvements. There is no quantitative housing requirement reason to reallocate this site.

Non-Preferred Sites

MO07

Name: Corrie Road (West)

Use(s): Housing

MO08

Name: Balvaird Road

Use(s): Housing

MO09

Name: Land Adjacent to Ord Arms Hotel

Use(s): Housing

MO10

Name: Highfield

Use(s): Housing

These sites are not preferred because they are distant from most of the town's facilities particularly the primary school, there is no quantitative housing requirement reason to allocate it and some of them suffer from servicing restrictions.

3.25 Munlochry | Poll Lochaidh

Munlochry is a small village with a population of 500 and a primarily dormitory function. Commuter housing pressures are created by the settlement's location close to major work centres and its attractive outlook towards Munlochry Bay and a surrounding wooded countryside. Servicing capacity is also good with water supply, sewage treatment and education provision all capable of accommodating limited expansion.

However, Munlochry lacks sufficient local employment opportunities or good enough public transport connectivity to make it a sustainable location for further growth. It is also a village that straddles a busy road that acts as a through route for other commuter traffic travelling to and from a large part of the Black Isle. Side road capacity is also limited.

Taking account of these development factors we believe that this Plan should constrain future development potential to the completion of existing allocated and permitted sites.

Placemaking Priorities

- To consolidate not expand the village.
- To avoid the need to invest in new infrastructure such as the primary school by limiting growth to a level that can be accommodated by existing facilities.
- To support the completion of development at already earmarked sites.
- To seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of an active travel link between Munlochry and Avoch.

Map 3.28



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Sites

Preferred Sites

ML01

Name: Hillpark Brae

Use(s): Housing

ML02

Name: South of The Post Office

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community, Retail)

ML03

Name: Station Brae

Use(s): Community

ML04

Name: North of A832

Use(s): Business

All of the above sites benefit from allocation in the approved development plan and/or a planning permission. They are also relatively unconstrained for example 3 of the 4 sites could utilise existing road and foul sewer access/connection points. Redevelopment of ML04 should lead to a net environmental improvement.

Non-Preferred Sites

ML05

Name: South West of Village

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

ML06

Name: East of Village

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

There is no quantitative housing need for the sites that have been suggested through the Plan's Call for Sites process. Moreover, the sites are peripheral, are in the same ownership as allocated alternatives, and would breach the limited spare capacity of local infrastructure networks.

3.26 Nairn | Inbhir Narann

Nairn is the third largest settlement in Highland and provides a wide range of economic and social functions for the wider Nairnshire county. Given its attractive coastal location and setting the town is also a well established tourism and leisure hub. It has seen a slight increase in population since 2011 with the number of residents now standing at just over 10,000.

The aIMFLDP identifies Nairn as an important settlement within the A96 Growth Corridor with nearly 1,000 new homes delivered since the year 2000. Most of these new homes have been built at Lochloy on the eastern side of the town and progress is currently being made to deliver an active travel bridge over the railway line and enhance connections through Balmakeith Industrial Estate. The large housing and mixed use sites allocated to the west and south of Nairn have not been progressed.

There is support and pressure for the Scottish Government's A96 dualling programme which includes the Auldearn/Nairn to Inverness section as the first stage to progress as soon as possible. Nairn will experience major change as a result of the Scottish Government's commitment to dual track the A96 by 2030 which includes a bypass of the town. The delivery of a bypass of the town and the related de-trunking of the existing A96 through the town centre will ease long standing congestion problems and will support the aspirations for related improvements to the public realm and built environment. This includes: making King Street more pedestrian friendly, introducing more greenery and new mixed use development fronting streets. These are set out in more detail in the [Nairn Community Town Centre Plan](#)⁽⁵⁸⁾ - which is non-statutory supplementary guidance.

Furthermore, the community have been ambitious and proactive in setting out an updated vision for the future of Nairn with a regeneration plan to accompany a bid for regeneration capital grant funding. This takes account of previous masterplans for the area and attempts to provide a plan for economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The emerging ambitions are focused around strengthening Nairn's strategic role as an economic and cultural hub, town centre and harbour regeneration, infrastructure delivery and the enhancement of greenspaces. Alongside this plan, physical works are starting as part of funding secured through the Team Hamish campaign. Planning permission was also recently granted for a mixed use town centre scheme which overlooks King Street and helps to take forward the aims of the Town Centre Plan.

Continued investment in certain pieces of infrastructure will be needed to support the area to prosper. Whilst there are no current capacity issues in either the primary or secondary schools, the condition of the schools is poor. Nairn also has combined sewer overflow issues which has led to

58 http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/12737/nairn_town_centre_action_plan_draft.pdf

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

pollution to the Nairn bathing beaches in the past. Following major investment in the network over recent years it has helped both beaches achieve upgrading of the water quality rating from "poor" to "sufficient".

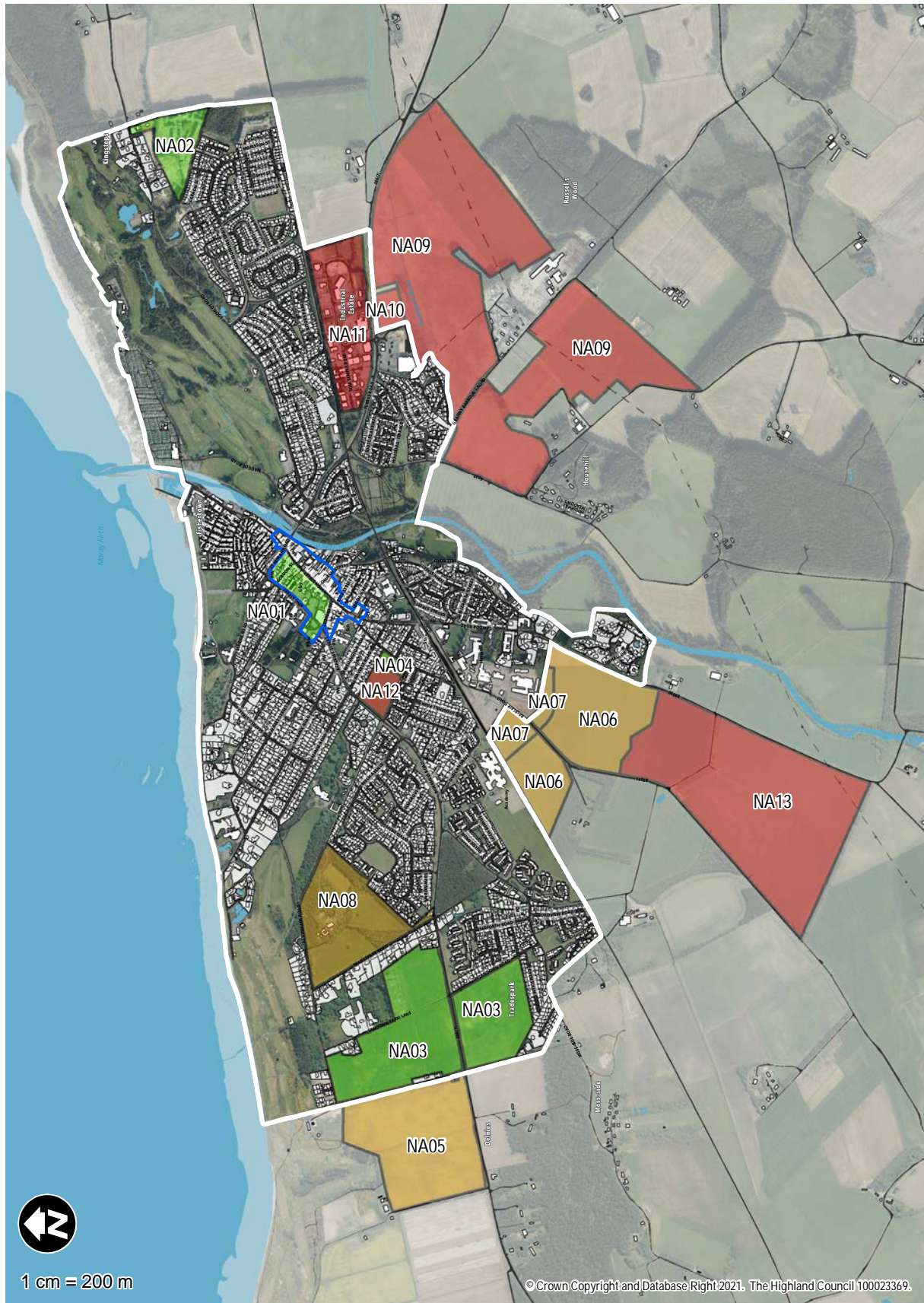
Given its good transport links and its role within the wider County, we think that Nairn should maintain its place in the top tier of the settlement hierarchy and be the focus of the area's growth. The town centre continues to be the first preference for development and a number of key sites provide particular opportunities. Alongside of this we believe there is opportunity to use Nairn Common Good land to deliver the next phase of development and which is integrated with the town and in line with the [Development Brief](#)⁽⁵⁹⁾ which we intend to carry forward as part of the plan review. Across the wider settlement there remain to be challenges for the delivery of other growth directions including infrastructure constraints and the compatibility with existing land uses. The Council is keen to work with the local community and wider stakeholders to address barriers to development and help realise community aspirations.

Placemaking Priorities

- Strengthen Nairn's role as the strategic market, service and social centre of Nairnshire.
- Consolidate the expansion of Nairn with growth focused on areas which are well connected to the town and facilities and can deliver improved active travel links.
- Implement the Town Centre Action Plan to make it more accessible, attractive, and promote regeneration and tourism opportunities.
- Further regenerate and enhance the harbour as a leisure and tourist destination and create better connections with the town centre.
- Maximise the potential benefits from the A96 bypass by creating a more attractive environment and improved active travel links.
- Seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of the A96 Coastal and Landward Trails.
- Concerted effort to maintain, and improve wherever possible, the water quality of the beaches in Nairn.

59 https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12699/sandown_development_brief

Map 3.29 Nairn



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

NA01

Name: Nairn Town Centre

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

NA02

Name: Kingsteps

Use(s): Housing

NA03

Name: Sandown

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community)

NA04

Name: Former Showfield East

Use(s): Housing

A number of development opportunities remain within the town centre (site NA01) and the Nairn Town Centre Action Plan provides a guide for delivering regeneration and creating a more accessible and attractive environment.

Kingsteps has planning permission for 117 new homes and is currently nearing completion. Land at Sandown is considered to offer the best option for the strategic growth of Nairn as there is an adopted Development Brief which sets out a well considered layout, integrating development with areas of open space and the existing urban fabric. It also provides a logical expansion area, is located on relatively flat land and with improved active travel infrastructure can provide convenient connections to the centre and main facilities.

The land at Showfield East is considered to be suitable for a relatively small amount of development providing that it complements and is compatible with the existing area of green space. It can also be used to help create improved access and parking for the public.

Alternative Sites

NA05

Name: Delnies

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community)

NA06

Name: Nairn South

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community)

NA07

Name: Sawmill expansion

Use(s): Industry

NA08

Name: Achareidh

Use(s): Housing

Nairn South is positioned close to many key facilities, including the hospital and train station and there remains developer interest in taking forward a mix of uses in this area. However, a number of transport related issues have yet to be resolved. Recent planning decisions have also highlighted concerns about compatibility with surrounding land uses. Further information is required to demonstrate that viable solutions to these constraints can be delivered. As it stands there are other sites across the town which are more deliverable.

Whilst Sandown is identified as Preferred, Delnies is more detached from the existing settlement edge and would have a visual impact on the west of Nairn, particularly if it came forward in advance of Sandown. Its location means it would also not be as attractive for active travel to key facilities than other sites. Although there is developer interest in taking the site forward - which has led to the site being identified as Alternative - for the reasons above this would not be considered an ideal location for future growth.

There may be development potential within Achareidh but unresolved access constraints and a lack of developer interest leads to it not being supported. If the landowner can better demonstrate that the site is viable, constraints can be overcome and can provide more detail on the siting of development, there may be scope for its inclusion in the Plan.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Non-Preferred Sites

NA09

Name: Granny Barbour Road

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Retail, Community)

NA10

Name: East of the Retail Park

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Retail)

NA11

Name: Balmakeith

Use(s): Business

NA12

Name: Former Showfield West

Use(s): Housing

NA13

Name: Nairn South Extension

Use(s): Housing

Whilst the large site put forward at Granny Barbour Road compares reasonably well against other large site options in terms of viability, there are certain factors which result in it being Non-Preferred. These include the scale of development proposed exceeds what is required, it requires a relatively high level of new infrastructure and the areas at risk of flooding push development to the outer reaches of the site furthest removed from the existing settlement.

Land to the east of the retail park is non preferred as further retail uses could have an adverse impact on the town centre. Whilst housing development could help to provide a more attractive entrance into the town, it is distant from the town centre and key facilities.

Balmakeith industrial estate is largely built out, with only a few vacant plots remaining and as such any development allocation is not considered to be required. Building the active travel bridge over the adjacent railway line to Lochloy is a key priority alongside enhancing connections to it through the industrial estate.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

The proposal to extend Nairn South beyond the current allocation is not being supported as there are still unresolved issues relating to the existing allocation. The extension would lead to greater impacts on the landscape and be less sustainable than alternative site options.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

3.27 North Kessock | Ceasag a Tuath

North Kessock accommodates around 1,200 permanent residents and benefits from close proximity to the City of Inverness in terms of relatively easy access to employment, water, sewerage and other infrastructure provision. Secondary education provision is further afield but both primary and high school capacities are adequate. The village's A9 junction has been upgraded and an improvement to the Kessock Bridge A9/82 junction is programmed to be completed in the next 10 years. The village also has a sheltered, southerly aspect and room for expansion is available on gently undulating land.

More negatively, there is one feasible location for growth, to the west of the village. The A9 and its adjoining high pressure gas pipeline constrain growth to the north and the Beaully Firth and its associated flood risk and heritage interests constrain expansion to the south. Land to the west is prime farmland. Infill opportunities are limited by both topography and the need to safeguard valued greenspace.

The approved development plan allocation and planning permissions at Bellfield were predicated on a new golf course being constructed at that location. Over the last 5 years, the demand for new golf courses not associated with existing championship courses in Highland has waned. It is now unlikely that such a new course at this location could attract sufficient membership and visitor demand to make it viable.

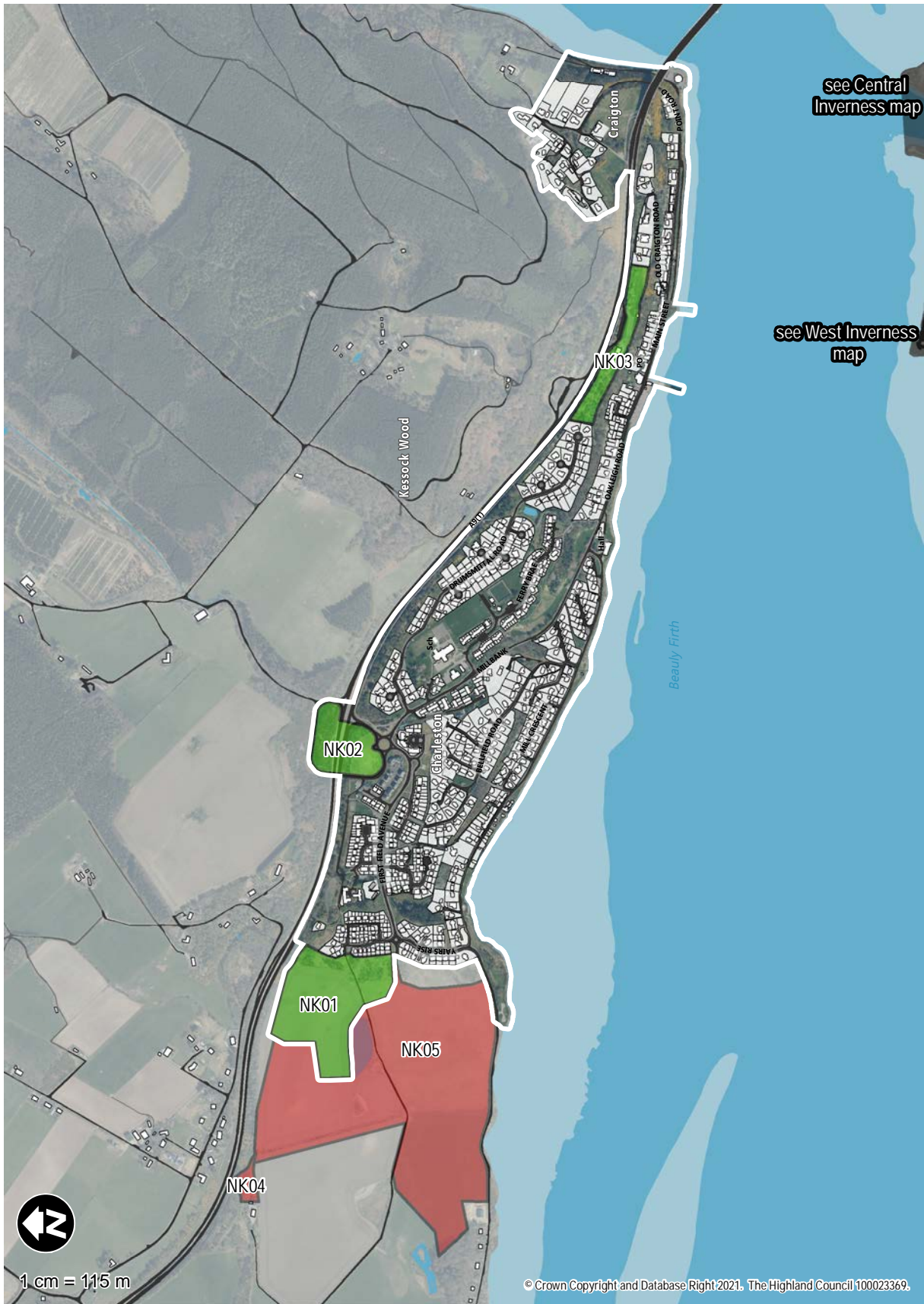
Given the above factors, we believe that limited development would be acceptable on land to the west of the village and that the settlement because it lies at the northern gateway to the City of Inverness could also play a strategic role in managing travel and visitor impacts by accommodating a Park and Ride and a campervan servicing site.

Placemaking Priorities

- To support limited, mixed use expansion to the west of the settlement.
- To secure infrastructure improvements that play a strategic role in managing travel and visitor impacts.
- To presume against infill development on greenspaces within the village where they offer amenity, recreational and/or nature conservation value.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.30 North Kessock



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

NK01

Name: Bellfield Farm (East)

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Community)

NK02

Name: Adjoining A9 Junction

Use(s): Community (Park and Choose/Ride)

NK03

Name: A9 Northbound Car Park

Use(s): Business/Tourism (Campervan service area)

Land at Bellfield Farm (East) benefits from a previous development allocation and is unlikely to be feasible for business/commercial development in connection with a golf course. It may still support commercial or community use together with limited housing development. Land adjoining the A9 junction is the optimum location for an interceptor park and choose/ride site to encourage changes to more sustainable travel modes. Similarly, the existing A9 northbound car park and adjoining land is underutilised and could better manage the impacts of campervan visitor demand.

Non-Preferred Sites

NK04

Name: Lettoch Farm

Use(s): Housing

NK05

Name: Bellfield Farm (West)

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Business, Tourism, Community)

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

The suggested housing site at Lettoch Farm and expansion area on the west part of Bellfield Farm are not favoured because they are distant from the village's facilities, there is no quantitative housing requirement need beyond the capacity of above site NK01 which is better located and (in the case of NK05) a large area of prime farmland would be irreversibly lost.

3.28 Seaboard Villages | Bailtean Cladaich

The Seaboard Villages of Balintore, Hilton of Cadbol and Shandwick lie on the east coast of the Fearn Peninsula and have a population of around 1000 people. Historically the villages evolved around the coast with the economy focussed on fishing. There was significant expansion of the villages in the 1970's owing to the oil boom, however development has since slowed pace. There are some renewed employment opportunities in the local area, most significantly at the Port of Nigg and the local primary and secondary school have some spare capacity. The rich history and picturesque location of the villages mean the area is an attractive place for visitors and there is potential for this to be built upon. In recent times the villages have suffered from a decrease in bus services which has an impact on residents being able to access employment opportunities elsewhere; there may be opportunities to seek developer contributions towards a Dial-a Bus service.

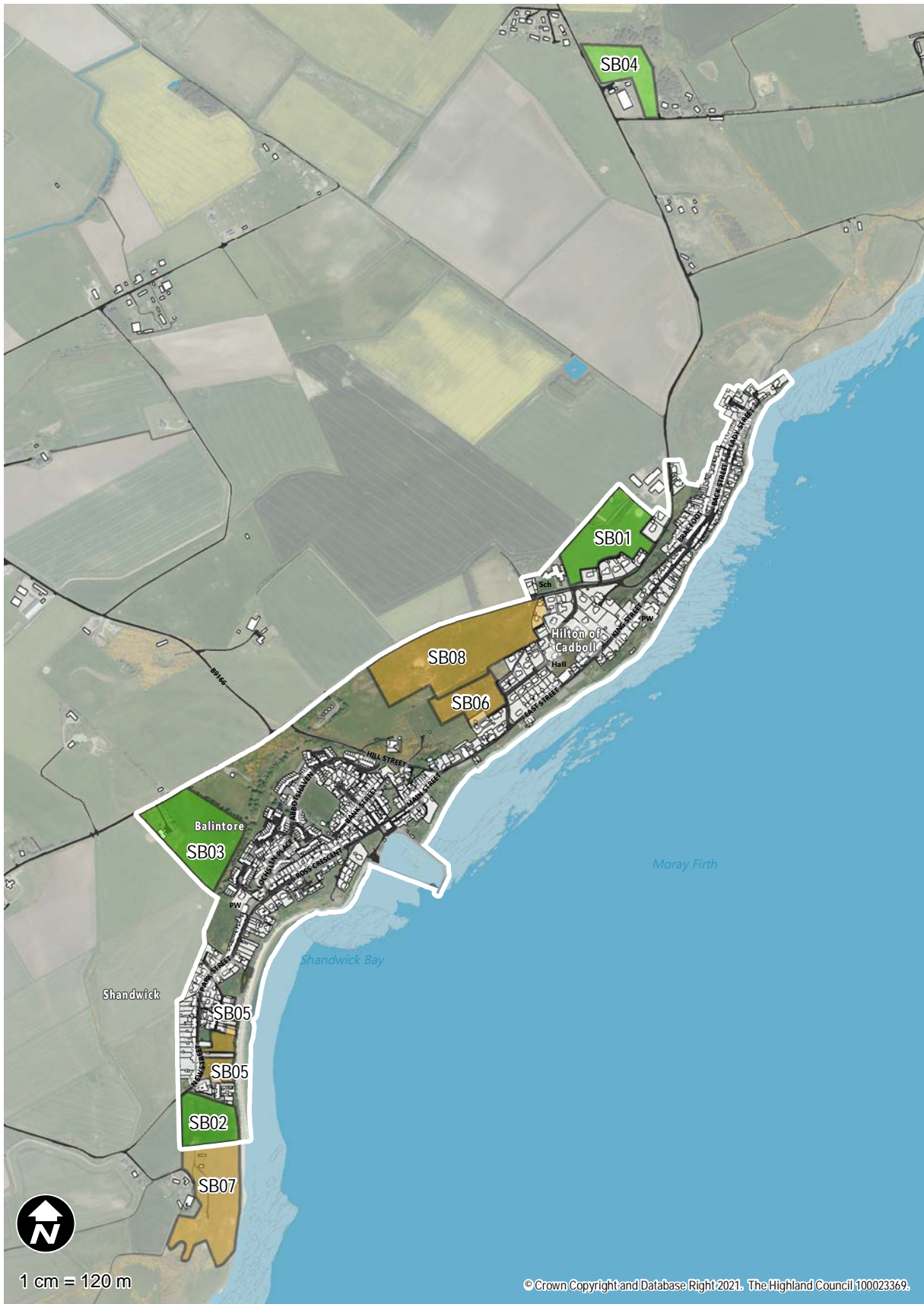
Expansion of the village's is constrained by the steep coastal slope and the "Shandwick Stone" scheduled monument to the north. There are also areas of prime agricultural land close to the villages, in particular at its south west boundaries. The existing allocations that have not yet been developed, continue to provide the most logical locations for expansion given their ease of access and servicing. However given the relatively remote location of the villages in the plan area, limited sustainable transport opportunities, a reduced housing need in the area and the viability and marketability of sites only limited amount of growth is proposed. This has resulted in a number of existing allocated sites and new sites being identified as alternative or non preferred.

Placemaking Priorities

- Focus limited housing growth close to existing facilities.
- Support a mixed range of viable and marketable housing sites.
- Key infrastructure improvements.
- Build on the growing reputation of the villages as a place for tourists with potential for a new caravan site at Shandwick.
- Protect the setting of the 'Shandwick Stone' scheduled monument and areas of prime agricultural land.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.31



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

SB01

Name: Land East of Primary School

Use(s): Housing

SB02

Name: Land South of Shore Street

Use(s): Mixed Use
(Housing/Business/Tourism/Caravan Park)

SB03

Name: Balintore Industrial Estate

Use(s): Business/Light Industrial

SB04

Name: Cadboll Industrial Estate

Use(s): Business/Light Industrial

Land to the east of the Primary School is an existing allocated site, benefits from a planning in principle permission, represents a logical expansion area and there are no significant barriers to its delivery.

The northern part of land South of Shore Street is currently allocated for housing, business and tourism and an extension the site southwards has been requested. The northern part of this site continues to be supported for these uses on the basis that it continues to provide an opportunity for small scale low density housing. Its attractive outlook also makes it suitable for sensitively designed holiday accommodation. However given its proximity to the coast and low lying nature of parts of the site it may be at risk from flooding. Also SSSI, Shandwick stone Scheduled Monument and pipeline.

Balintore Industrial Estate continues to be allocated to allow for new employment opportunities in the village. Cadboll Industrial Estate represents a new site that has potential for further business and light industrial use. This site is not considered suitable for a housing allocation given its relatively remote location distant from the villages.

Alternative Sites

SB05

Name: New Street

Use(s): Housing

SB06

Name: Murray View

Use(s): Housing

SB07

Name: Land South of Shore Street - southern half

Use(s): Mixed Use
(Housing/Business/Tourism)

SB08

Name: Land to North East of Cemetery

Use(s): Housing

The sites at New Street represent a new opportunity for small to medium scale infill housing development within Shandwick. However there are some constraints to delivering these sites in terms of flood risk, loss of land that has some amenity value and loss of views over open water. On balance it is considered that this site may more suitably be shown as "grey land" in the Proposed Plan, meaning that the principle of development can be supported subject to detailed considerations. Murray View and Land Northeast of Cemetery are existing allocated sites, whilst there has been no progress on the sites in terms of planning applications, they may continue to represent a central expansion opportunity with good links to the villages. However, given the reduction in housing need in the area and doubts over marketability and viability these sites are considered as alternatives to Land East of the Primary School.

A request was made for an extension southwards to the allocated site South of Shore Street. An extension is not considered suitable due to adverse landscape impacts and potential flooding issues. Furthermore only a limited amount of housing is required to be allocated at this location and it is considered the northern section of the site that is already allocated in combination with other preferred sites provide ample provision. The existing site also provides sufficient space for holiday accommodation without the need for an expansion to the site.

3.29 Strathpeffer | Srath Pheofhair

Strathpeffer is an exemplary spa town unique to the Highlands that is contained amidst a splendid natural setting. Its traditional core, which is designated as a conservation area, is characterised by many fine examples of Victorian and early 20th century architecture and attractive woodland.

The village's outstanding built heritage, combined with high quality agricultural land, ancient and plantation woodland, historic Designed Landscapes and steep gradients, allows for only modest growth of the settlement. The accessibility of Strathpeffer by sustainable modes of transport and employment opportunities are limited, however the active travel link to Dingwall, the Peffery Way should be encouraged.

A small amount of serviced housing land at Ulladale Crescent continues to remain within the Settlement Boundary.

Placemaking Priorities

- High quality, masterplanned western housing expansion.
- Support active travel link to Dingwall.
- Enhancement of tourist attractions and facilities.
- Protection and enhancement of outstanding built and natural heritage features.

Map 3.32 Strathpeffer



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

SP01

Name: Kinellan South

Use(s): Housing

SP02

Name: Kinellan West

Use(s): Housing

Kinellan South is part of an existing allocation, its southern section has detailed planning permission for 42 homes and construction was originally due for completion in late 2020. Kinellan West is a logical expansion to the site currently under construction.

Alternative Sites

SP03

Name: Kinellan North

Use(s): Housing

SP04

Name: Nutwood

Use(s): Housing

The Kinellan North part of the site continues to be seen as a logical expansion area and provision has been made for a connection with the southern part of the site. However there are concerns regarding the suitability of access to this site given the relatively steep gradient and the presence of flooding issues on the site. The site is also more visible than the western portion of the site.

The site at Nutwood currently has planning permission in principle. However, there are some doubts regarding the viability and marketability of this site given it has previously been allocated and has now had planning permission for a number of years.

3.30 Tain | Baile Dhubhthaich

Tain is a strategic growth centre for the East Ross area due to its close location to many large scale employers and availability of a wide range of services. The historic core of Tain and its Conservation Area are key components of the character of the town.

In recent times large scale housing and mixed use allocations have not come forward for development, apart from the site at Rowan Drive, which is nearing completion. It is proposed that during the lifetime of this plan, housing requirements should be focused on more central locations closer to the town centre.

The delivery of a new 3-18 campus has been a long held aspiration for the town. Various site options have been considered, but at present the land to the rear of Craighill Primary School is the likely preferred location. If this site proceeds then the existing Tain Royal Academy will be available for sensitive redevelopment. The delivery of the campus will ultimately influence the location of future housing growth and it will provide an opportunity to re-focus housing growth closer to the town centre prior to significant expansion beyond the existing settlement.

Glenmorangie Distillery is an important local employer and it generates a significant visitor footfall. An active travel link between the distillery and the town centre would provide sustainable travel opportunities for both employees and visitors and it would also encourage more visitors to spend time in Tain when visiting the distillery.

Placemaking Priorities

- Delivery of a new 3-18 campus.
- Ensure the historical core of the town is protected.
- Improve town centre environment, diversify activity and improve accessibility.
- Active travel link between the town and Glenmorangie Distillery.
- Develop new uses for redundant space and buildings, including The Grove and Tain Picture House.
- Focus house building closer to the town centre.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.33 Tain



Sites

Preferred Sites

TN01

Name: Land to Rear of Craighill Primary School

Use(s): Mixed Use

TN02

Name: Tain Royal Academy

Use(s): Mixed Use

TN03

Name: East of Burgage Drive

Use(s): Mixed Use

TN04

Name: Blarliath

Use(s): Business

TN05

Name: Glenmorangie

Use(s): Industry

Land to the Rear of Craighill Primary School and Tain Royal Academy are both indicated as preferred options for mixed use allocations (including housing). Only one of those allocations will ultimately be taken forward once the outcome of the campus location is confirmed. Land East of Burgage Drive can be progressed in advance of other land at Knockbreck Road.

Alternative Sites

TN06

Name: Morangie Road

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

	TN07
Name: Kirksheaf Road	Use(s): Housing
	TN08
Name: Knockbreck Road	Use(s): Mixed Use
	TN09
Name: Cemetery	Use(s): Community
	TN10
Name: Ardlarach Farm	Use(s): Housing
	TN11
Name: Croft Arthur	Use(s): Housing
	TN12
Name: West of Viewfield Road	Use(s): Housing
	TN13
Name: Viewfield	Use(s): Housing

Land at Morangie Road and Kirksheaf Road are unlikely to come forward for development. Kirksheaf Road may be suitable for a small amount of low density development. The cemetery extension is complete and the cemetery will remain within the Settlement Development Area but not as an allocation. The large mixed use allocation at Knockbreck Road has an adopted masterplan. To date there has been no development of this land. A number of new sites were identified through the Call for Sites to the south west of the A9. Local Highland councillors at the Easter Ross Area Committee stated their view that these sites may be more viable than the preferred sites that lie within the bypass, particularly for self-build housing plot development. Feedback is sought on these options.

Non-Preferred Sites

TN14

Name: The Grove

Use(s): Housing

TN15

Name: Southeast of Knockbreck House

Use(s): Mixed Use

Land Southeast of Knockbreck House is unlikely to be required over the lifetime of this plan. The proposed site at The Grove is shown as non-preferred as it is below the minimum size requirement for an allocation. However as it is within the SDA redevelopment of the site would be supported subject to it meeting all relevant planning policies.

3.31 Tomatin | An Tom Aiteann

Tomatin is a small village, approximately 26km south of Inverness. The current settlement emerged mainly as a result of both the creation of the Tomatin Distillery and its position on the former A9.

Whilst the distillery remains the main economic driver in the area, planning permission was granted in 2018 for a major redevelopment of the former Little Chef site including the creation of a hotel, shops and filling station. The village has also benefited greatly from several new community facilities including a new community hall/sports venue and office space which opened in November 2019 with the previous hall being converted into a shop.

Only a handful of new homes have been built on the allocated sites. There has been a greater trend over the past decade towards large single houses built on side roads surrounding the village. With no coordinated approach towards providing active travel connections to the village core, this has led to the a reliance on private car journeys for getting around.

We are continuing to support opportunities for commercial development at the north end of the village, near the A9 junction, and at the former railway station. However, as Tomatin is not considered the most suitable place for large scale, strategic expansion the only housing site we are supporting is the land west of the church.

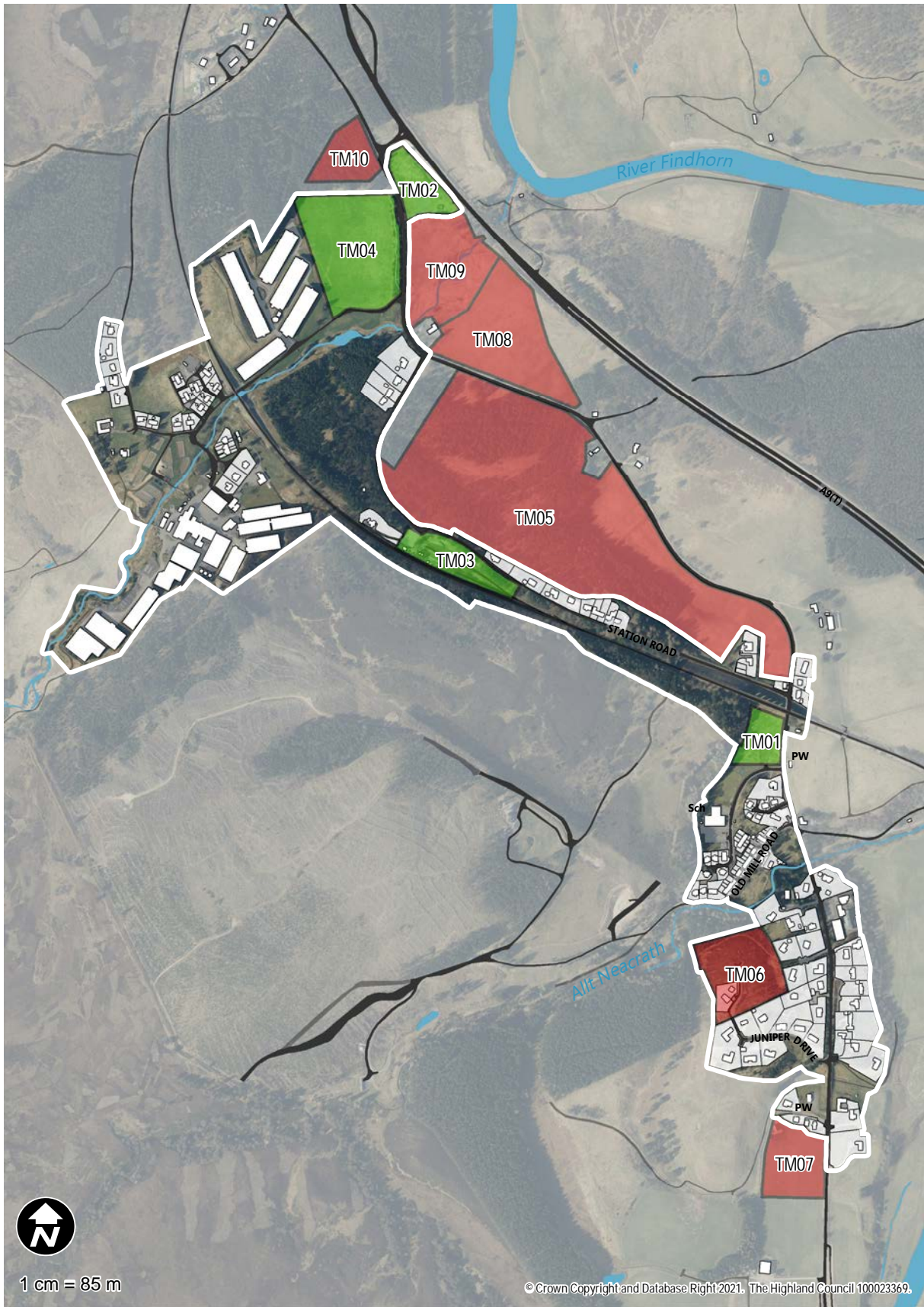
Due to the size and dispersed nature of Tomatin together with the scale of development proposed, there may be merit in reclassifying it as a Growing Settlement. This would still mean that we will direct development towards Tomatin but only on a scale more reflective of the existing settlement size and focused on infilling and rounding off.

Placemaking Priorities

- Creation of a new mixed use development close to the A9 junction to take advantage of its proposed improvement and the passing trade and employment opportunities that may flow from it.
- Develop new housing, particularly affordable housing to help retain young people and attract new people to the community.
- Create a continuous active travel connection between Tomatin and Moy.
- Explore potential for reinstating a rail halt to enhance public transport options for residents, attract business and tourists and reduce traffic on A9.
- Safeguard all areas of woodland in and around the settlement from development.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.34



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

TM01

Name: West of Church of Scotland

Use(s): Housing

TM02

Name: Former Little Chef

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Tourism, Retail)

TM03

Name: Former Railway Station

Use(s): Industry and Business

TM04

Name: Distillery expansion

Use(s): Industry

Land to the west of the church is preferred for housing development as it is centrally located, part brownfield and has developer interest. The former Little Chef site is brownfield site which is located in a prominent location immediately adjoining the A9 trunk road. It offers a prime commercial opportunity and planning permission was recently granted for a road-side retail and tourism centre. For these reasons we are proposing to allocate it for a mix of commercial uses. There is a long held aspiration within the community for the reinstatement of a railway station. Whilst there is no specific plans to take this forward at present the site offers potential for such uses and/or commercial space. We believe that the land to the east of the existing warehouses should be allocated for industrial uses as it owned by the distillery and forms part of their long term expansion plans.

Non-Preferred Sites

TM05

Name: North and East of Station Cottages

Use(s): Housing

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

TM06

Name: Hazelbank

Use(s): Housing

TM07

Name: West of War Memorial

Use(s): Housing

TM08

Name: North West of Porters Lodge

Use(s): Community

TM09

Name: South of former Little Chef

Use(s): Waste Water Treatment Facility

TM10

Name: West of former Little Chef

Use(s): Business

All of these sites are allocated for development within the approved development plan. However, they have not come forward for development and most of them require expensive and presently unprogrammed sewerage provision. Therefore we have significant doubts about their economic viability and propose their deletion from the Plan unless new evidence emerges such a developer commitment to build and Scottish Water's commitment to invest in a new sewage works or extension of pipework from the existing works.

3.32 Tore | An Todhar

In the Council's approved development plan for the period post 2021, Tore is identified as a major expansion settlement. This was predicated on forecasts of significant population growth and a buoyant housing market and the successful diversion of growth from Inverness, Easter Ross and particularly from the rest of the Black Isle to the village. Tore is still in a strategically competitive location, central to Inner Moray Firth employment opportunities and at the intersection of trunk and A roads.

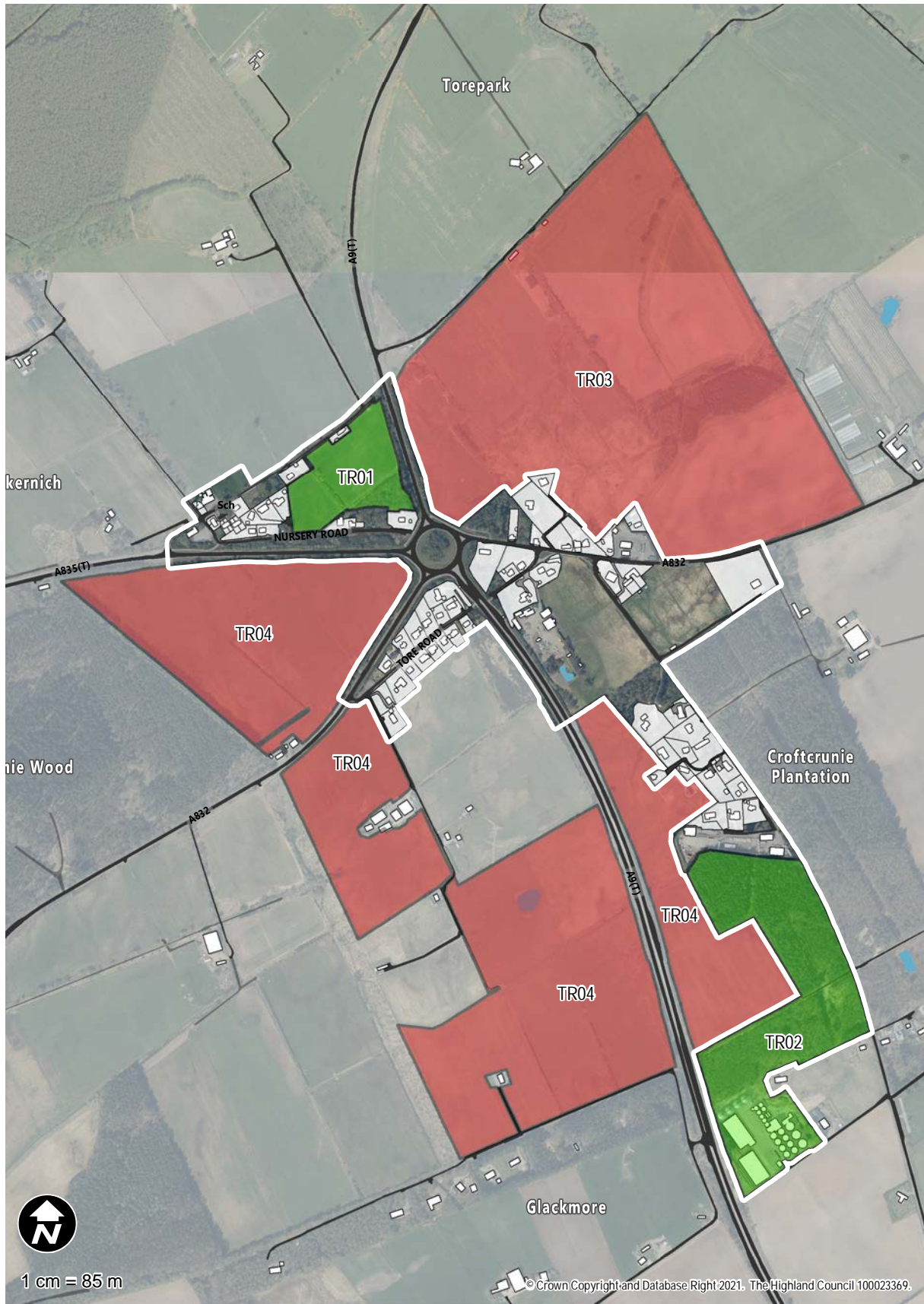
However, we now believe that a large new/expanded settlement at Tore would not meet our reassessed priorities such as addressing climate change through promoting more sustainable travel patterns and encouraging development in viable locations - i.e. where there is spare existing capacity in supporting infrastructure networks or new capacity can be added in a cost effective way by the public and private sectors. Tore has few existing, local jobs and the major road corridors inhibit active travel across the settlement in particular to and from the primary school and bus stops. Moreover, major expansion would require similarly significant up front investment in primary school and sewerage facilities.

Taking account of these specific development factors and the Plan's proposed spatial strategy of directing development to sustainable and viable locations, we believe that this Plan should only promote very limited infill development at Tore.

Placemaking Priorities

- To only support limited infill development at Tore.
- To control that expansion to the limited capacity of local primary school and sewerage facilities.
- To define a development envelope that supports the infilling of the clusters of buildings that make up the settlement of Tore.

Map 3.35 Tore



3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Sites

Preferred Sites

TR01

Name: By Woodneuk

Use(s): Housing

TR02

Name: North of The Grain Mill

Use(s): Industry

Land at Woodneuk benefits from a previous planning permission, would infill a cluster of existing development and is close to the primary school. Tore is a competitive location for industrial and storage uses and existing enterprises may require to be expanded. Treed land north of the grain mill has potential to absorb expansion of existing operations including larger scale buildings into the local landscape.

Non-Preferred Sites

TR03

Name: Tore North Expansion

Use(s): Mixed use (Housing, Community, Business, Industry, Retail)

TR04

Name: Tore West Expansion

Use(s): Mixed use (Housing, Community, Business, Industry, Retail)

Given the lower national and Highland population and household growth forecasts and our proposed revised spatial strategy of directing most development to sustainable and viable locations, we no longer believe that major expansion should be encouraged at Tore. Land at Tore North also has confirmed land availability constraints. A re-evaluation of Park and Choose/Ride sites has highlighted North Kessock as a potentially more effective location than Tore.

3.33 Tornagrain | Cnoc na Grèine

Tornagrain is a planned new town which lies between Inverness and Nairn. Over the next 30 to 40 years it is expected to provide 5,000 homes together with new schools, shops and a range of other facilities. With the over 300 homes now granted detailed planning permission, the first residents moved in during 2017 and demand has been relatively high with house sales steadily increasing.

Due to its high quality of layout and design, with many traditional features it already looks much like a long-established, attractive village. Several community facilities have been delivered in the first phase, including a nursery, tennis courts, and shop unit.

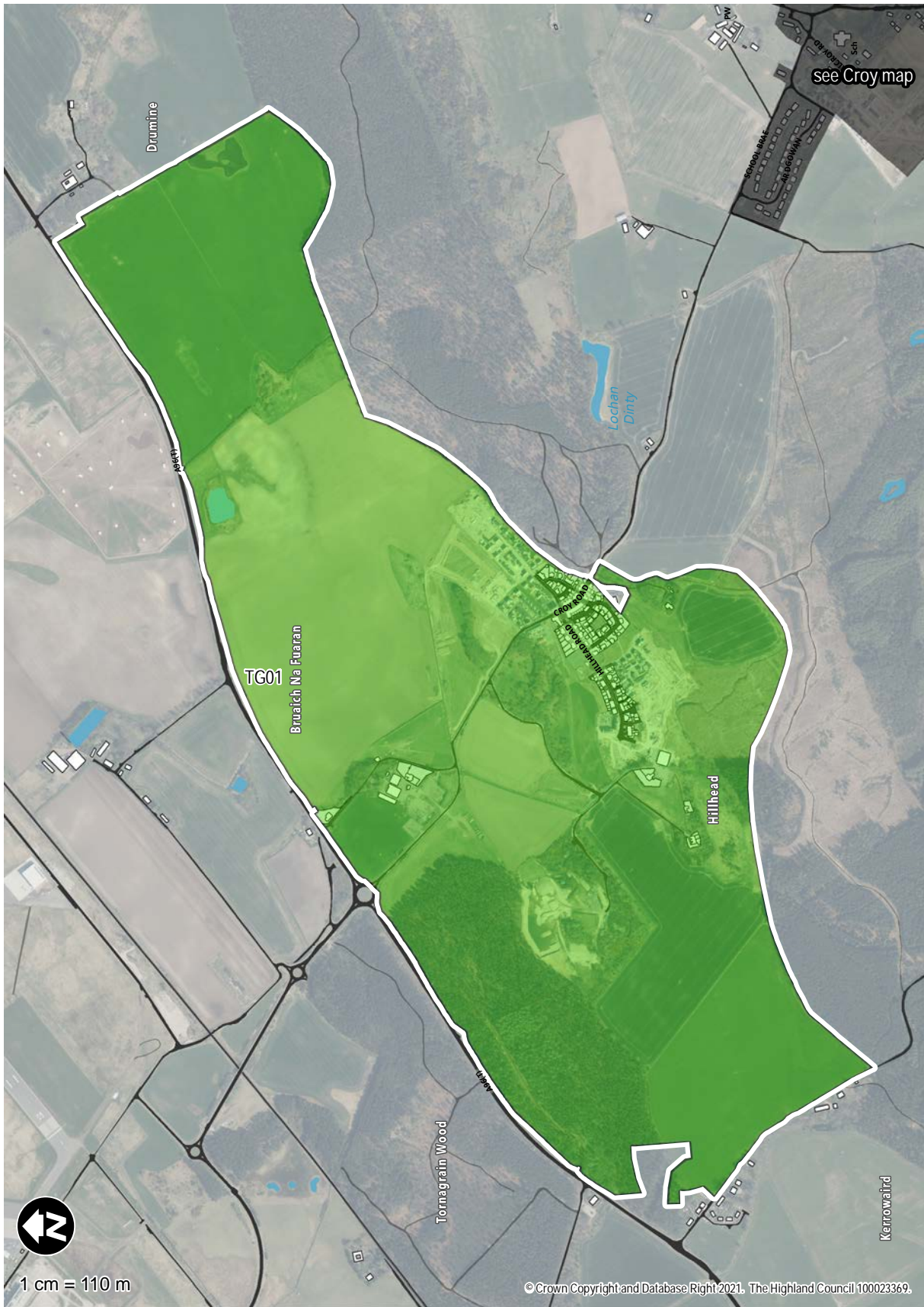
In line with the overall planning consent, the town will be progressed on a phased basis, comprising 7 main phases of development.

Placemaking Priorities

- Continue the early delivery of key facilities and infrastructure.
- Ensure affordable housing is delivered and meets the needs of the wider community.
- Enhance connections by active travel and sustainable transport to key employment destinations, including Inverness Airport Business Park and Dalcross Airport Industrial Estate.
- Maintain the delivery of high quality design and layout by following the principles set out in the masterplan and design code.
- Seek developer contributions and other funding towards the provision of the A96 Landward Trail.

3 Main Settlements | Prìomh Thuineachaidhean

Map 3.36 Tornagrain



Sites

Preferred Sites

TG01

Name: Tornagrain

Use(s): Mixed Use (Housing, Community, Business, Retail, Industry)

The planned new town at Tornagrain forms a key part of the future of the Inner Moray Firth area and has been shown to be a popular location since development commenced on site. We intend to allocate the whole of the new town but indicate within the Proposed Plan which parts of site will likely be delivered within the plan period.

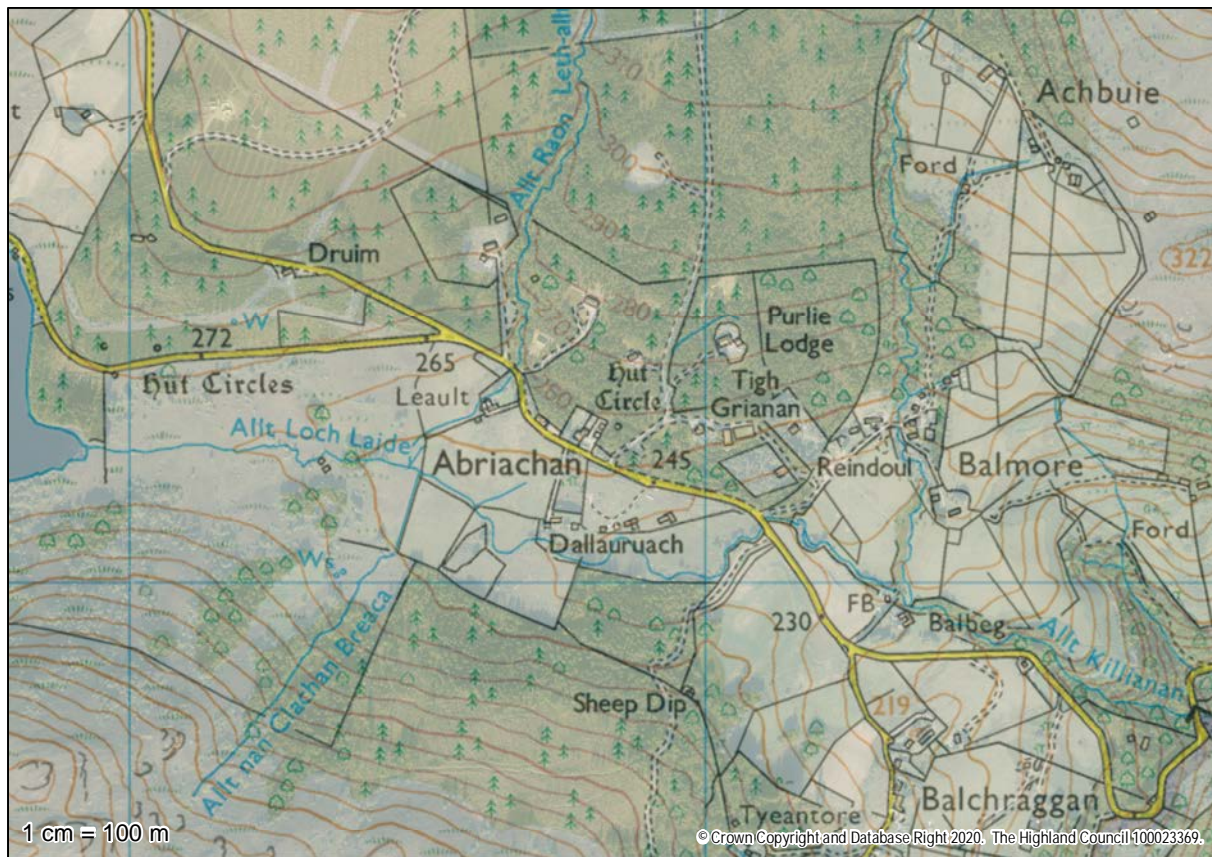
4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

The aIMFLDP contains an "Other Settlements" policy which, within a defined list of places, supports a lesser scale of development than within the "Main Settlements" but a more positive approach than within the countryside. Settlements currently included are places which have/had at least one community facility (e.g. a school or public hall). We intend to bring our policy approach to these smallest settlements in line with our other local development plans for Highland. We wish to call them "Growing Settlements" and not use the existence of a facility as the sole reason for including or excluding places from the list. Instead, we will only include places that have some development pressure, few environmental constraints to development, and facility/service networks that can accommodate additional building. These are listed as Tier 5 settlements in Settlement Hierarchy. For each potential "Growing Settlement" this Main Issues Report sets out draft key issues and placemaking priorities for comment. Illustrative material showing the locality is included for each settlement but please note that this is for contextual purposes only and of no policy significance. Once finalised, these will be applied in determining planning applications in these places.

Abriachan Obar Itheachan	Page 232
Balnain Baile an Àthain	Page 234
Barbaraville An Cladach	Page 236
Cannich Canaichannich	Page 237
Farr and Inverarnie Fàrr agus Inbhir Fheàrnaidh	Page 239
Foyers Foithir	Page 241
Garve Gairbh	Page 243
Gorthleck Goirtlig	Page 245
Hill of Fearn Cnoc na Manachainn	Page 246
Inver An t-Inbhir	Page 248
Marybank Bruach Màiri	Page 251
Milton of Kildary Baile a' Mhuilinn	Page 251
Portmahomack Port MoCholmaig	Page 253
Rhicullen/Newmore Ruighe a' Chuilinn/An Neimh Mhòr	Page 255
Tomich An Tomaich	Page 257

Abriachan | Obar Itheachan

Map 4.1 Abriachan



Issues

- The scattered crofting township at Abriachan sits high above Loch Ness on its northern flank and parts of the community offer an elevated outlook across and along the loch.
- There is a village hall but many other local facilities have closed because of the proximity of facilities in Inverness and Drumadrochit.
- Housebuilding within the community has been slow but steady but there is a lack of local employment opportunities other than offering tourist trail accommodation and crofting.
- There are active local community groups who have pioneered many local enterprises and initiatives including ownership of the Abriachan Forest with its car park, walks and hides.

Placemaking Priorities

- To respect the historic pattern of crofts and absence of a public sewerage system which necessitate continuity of the loose scatter of buildings and small existing groups of buildings at Balchraggan and Balmore.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

- To take account of the limitations of the substandard horizontal and vertical alignment of the township road and its largely unadopted side roads which reduce the scope for safe vehicular access.
- To avoid the more visually prominent land either side of the road which should remain substantially open.
- To respect the settlement's elevation and climatic exposure which suggest that new building plots should be located where they offer some shelter.
- To protect the identity and setting of the community by avoiding its sporadic extension.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

Balnain | Baile an Àthain

Map 4.2 Balnain



Issues

- Balnain lies alongside the A831, some 5km west of Drumnadrochit and within commuting distance of Inverness. It provides basic facilities for a scattered population throughout Glenurquhart.
- Local farming, forestry and estate work supports most local jobs.
- Opportunities to develop local tourist facilities and accommodation may arise with further promotion of the A831 tourist route and the Western Glens, and the Glenurquhart's archaeological, fishing and forest based recreation assets.
- Existing development is clustered around the primary school and hall, flanked by rising farm and woodland.

Placemaking Priorities

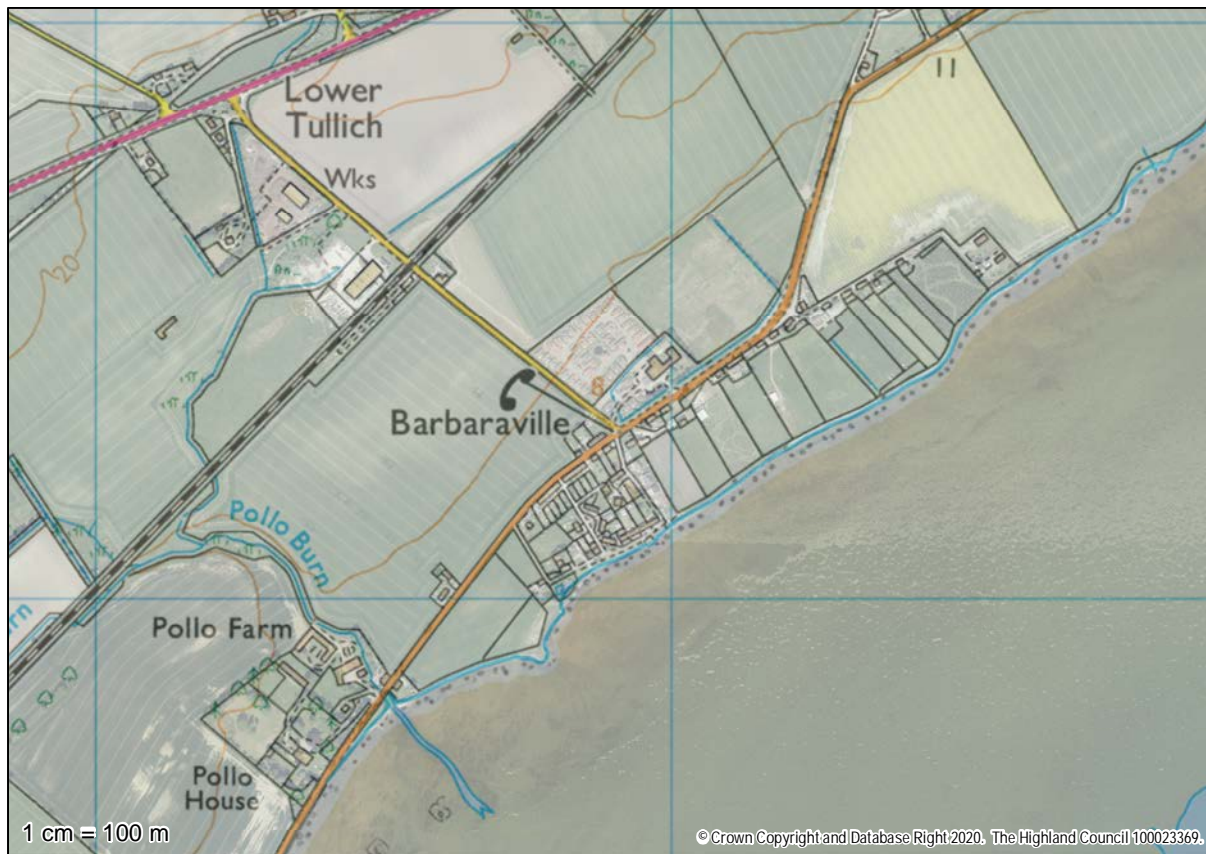
- To support further small scale housing development where it will help underpin local community facilities.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

- To direct most future development north of the A831 so as to protect the fine outlook west across open ground bordering Loch Meikle and avoid land at risk to flooding or erosion.
- To respect the limited local waste water treatment capacity.
- To support community initiatives to enhance local amenities, including management of the woodland beside the school, refurbishment of the play area and creation of a visitor focal point with better signage of local attractions and places of interest.

Barbaraville | An Cladach

Map 4.3 Barbaraville



Issues

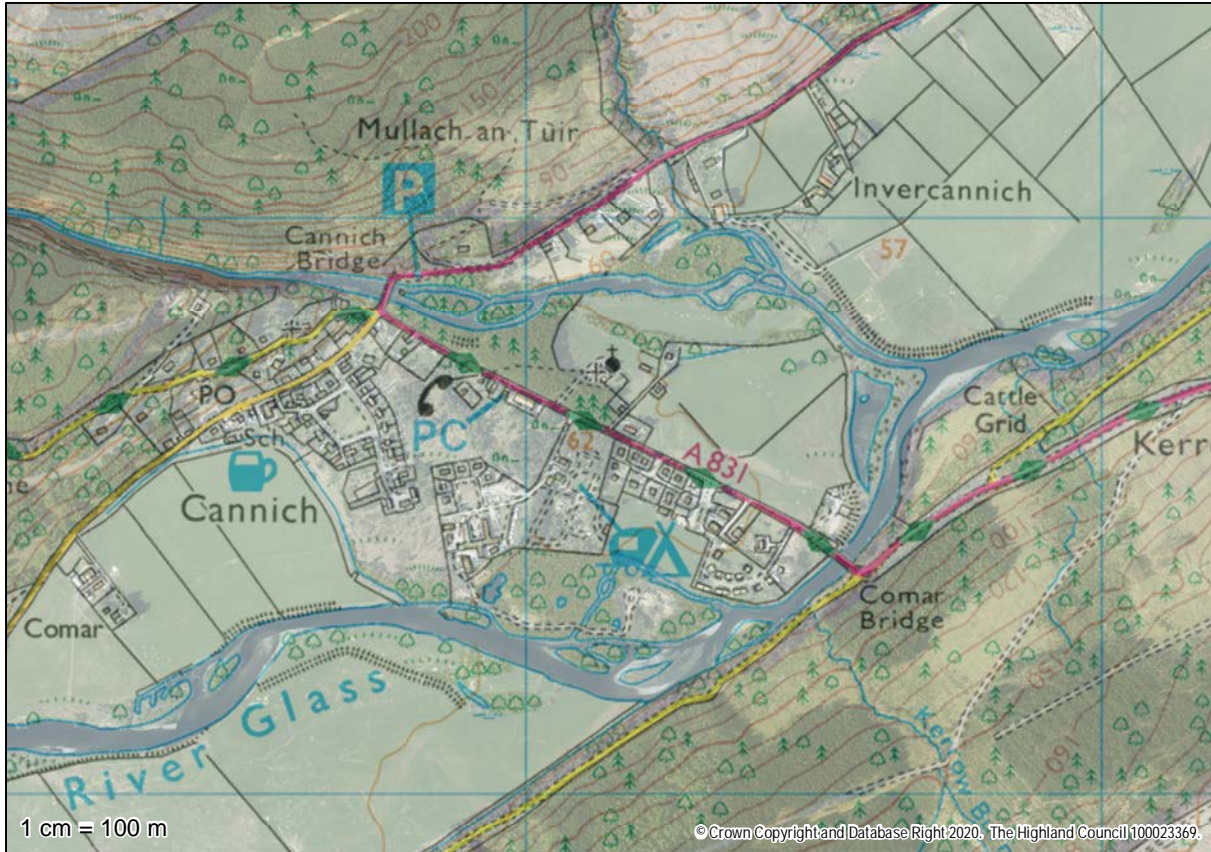
- Barbaraville is a small village on the north shore of Nigg Bay, with stunning views out over the Cromarty Firth towards Nigg and the Black Isle.
- In recent times there has been a small amount of house building and the most recent larger expansion was the building of a private retirement village.
- It is approximately 6km to Invergordon and has stops on the X25 Inverness-Dornoch bus route. There are a limited amount of services in the village – small shop, garden centre, care home and play park.
- Current planning application for level crossing improvement.

Placemaking Priorities

- Located within the hinterland.
- Preserve public views across the Cromarty Firth.

Cannich | Canaichannich

Map 4.4 Cannich



Issues

- Cannich is a small village in a compact physical form occupying the glen floor between steep slopes.
- That glen floor is shared with the Rivers Cannich and Glass and their associated flood risk areas which curtail where further development can occur.
- Cannich lies at a strategic point on the A831 tourist route equidistant from the main gateway centres of Drumnadrochit and Beauly and is the most important entry point for visitors to the Western Glens.
- Its distance from other centres allows it to support a limited number of local facilities including a shop and school.
- Traditional forest and hydroelectricity employment are giving way to conservation and recreation management opportunities for which the village could provide a broader range of upgraded services.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

- The local road system is "pinched" at the bridge or largely single track. Local water and sewerage facilities are adequate but of limited capacity.
- There is no confirmed private or affordable housing developer interest in the settlement.

Placemaking Priorities

- To diversify local employment opportunities taking advantage of Cannich's Western Glens visitor gateway location.
- To support further central housing development in parallel with this diversification including at the land adjoining the camping and caravan site.
- To respect the physical constraints of the settlement by not supporting development within or adjacent to the fluvial flood risk areas and not allowing sporadic development up the glen sides.
- To support a scale of development that helps sustain local facilities but doesn't overburden the limited capacity in the local water and sewerage network.

Farr and Inverarnie | Fàrr agus Inbhir Fheàrnaidh

Map 4.5 Farr and Inverarnie



Issues

- Farr and Inverarnie include several relatively small settlements strung out over 2km alongside the B851.
- There has been relatively high numbers of new houses completed over the past 20 years, with distinct clusters at Farr and Inverarnie.
- Farr Primary School has a healthy roll which is expected to continue. However, Inverness Royal Academy is under increasing pressure.

Placemaking Priorities

- Future development must only add to the existing clusters at Farr and Inverarnie. Limits of development should be Croftcroy junction to south and the Hall to north.
- Risk of flooding will limit further development in certain areas particularly further westwards towards the bridge over River Nairn and the area surrounding the bridge over the River Farnack.
- Safeguard areas of woodland from development.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

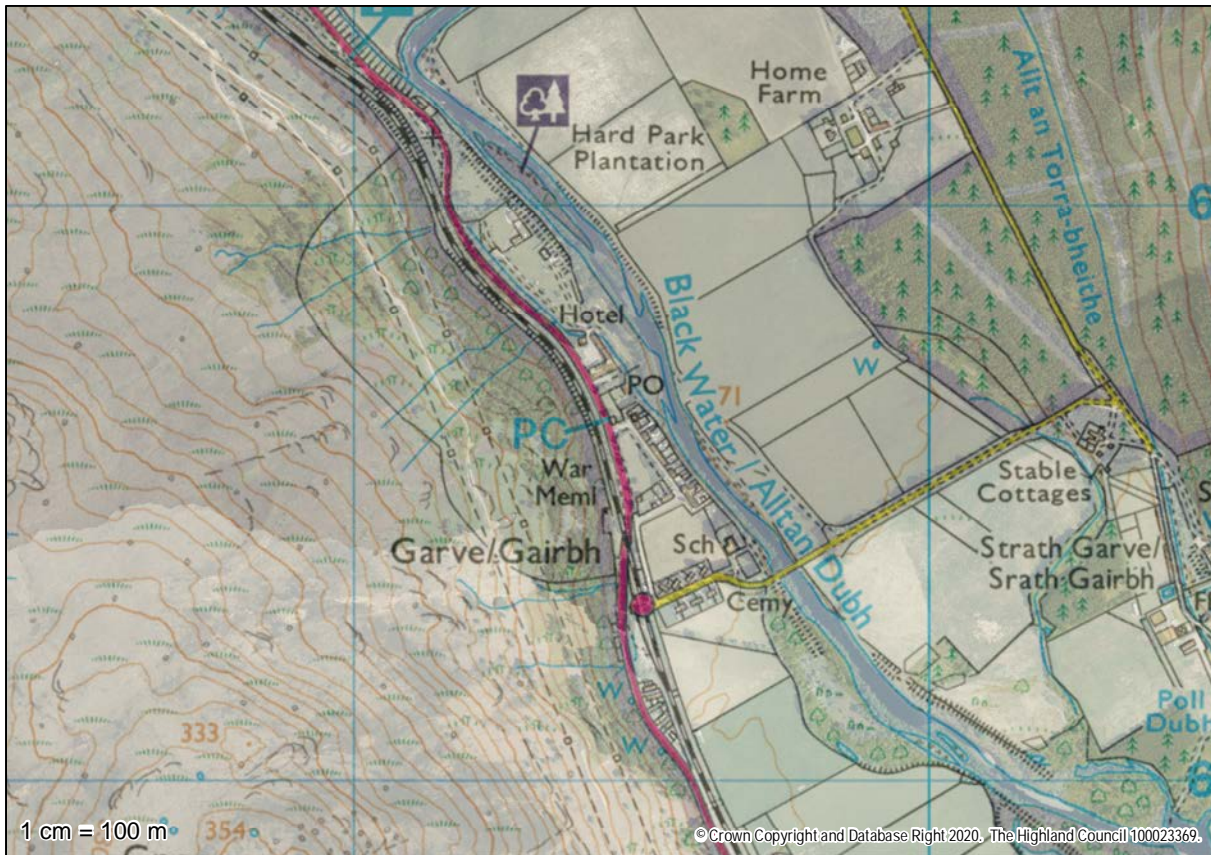
- Continue to develop community and recreational facilities and enhance the environmental features within the community-owned School Wood and Milton Wood.
- Create a continuous active travel connection between the two settlements.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

- Make the most of the National Cycle Network which runs through the village.
- New housing should be located close to facilities, such as the school and shop, or add to existing clusters of development.
- Support the renovation/redevelopment of Boleskine House to help boost the local economy.

Garve | Gairbh

Map 4.7 Garve



Issues

- Garve sits along the Black Water River, 8km north west of Contin on the A835, the main road to Ullapool. It also benefits from having a train station which is serviced by the regular Kyle of Lochalsh service.
- The Black Water River creates an attractive backdrop for the village, however there is also potential for flooding along the river, flood risk assessments may be required for some development.
- Rich built heritage with several Historic Environment Records in the local area, including Little Garve Bridge.
- Several core paths around the area – Village River path, Silverbridge circuit, Tor Breac forest track and Kinellan to Starthgarve.
- Benefits from a range of facilities including a village hall, hotel, small playing field, Wyvis Natural Play park, food takeaway, recycling point and a Primary School. Strathgarve Primary School has a low roll and is expected to decline further.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

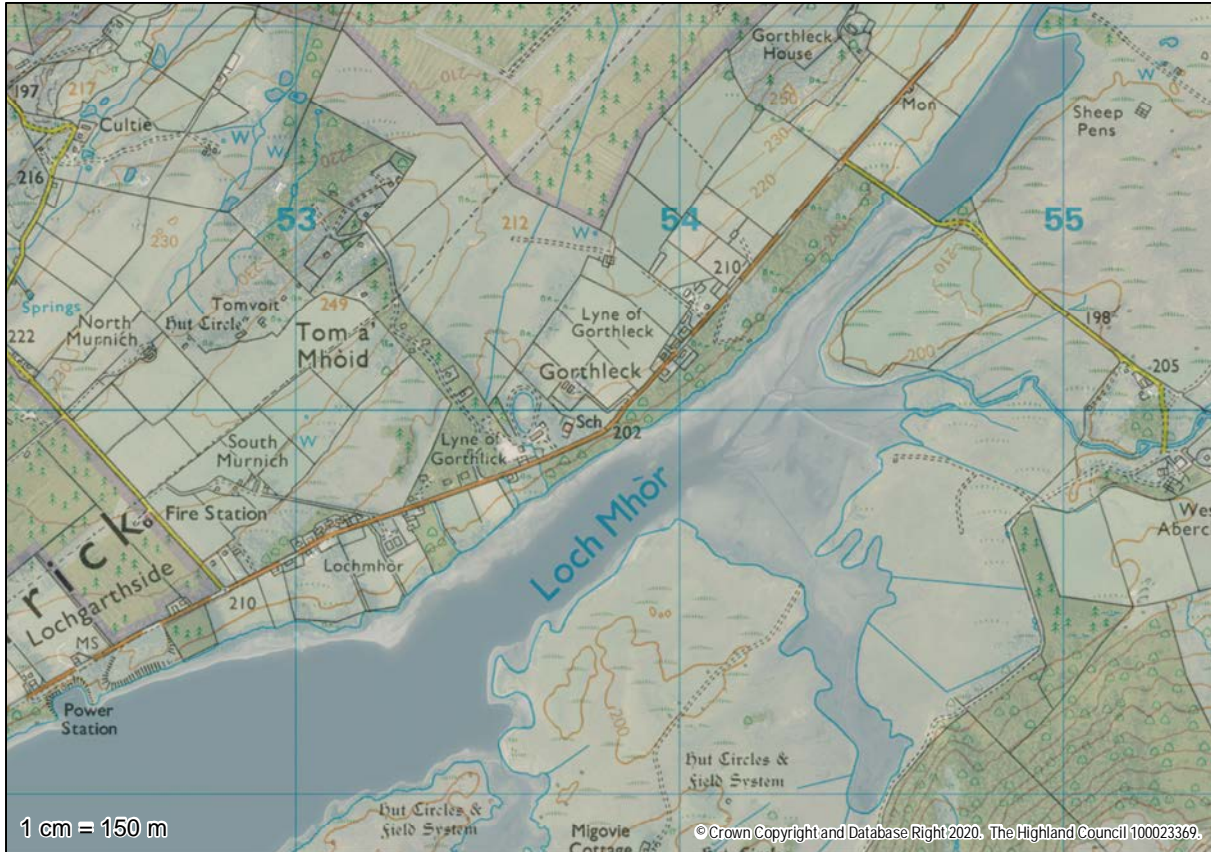
- The hotel has recently ceased trading however the community has aspirations for it and it should continue to play an important role in the community.
- Low levels of house building.
- Central sites have agricultural quality issues.

Placemaking Priorities

- New houses should be directed towards existing clusters.
- Discourage ribbon development along A832 or A835 especially north of village within Gorstan crofting area.
- Support re-development opportunities at the hotel and the land adjacent to it.
- Safeguard areas of native and ancient woodland from development.
- Continue to develop community and recreational facilities.
- Improve public transport connectivity.

Gorthleck | Goirtlig

Map 4.8 Gorthleck



Issues

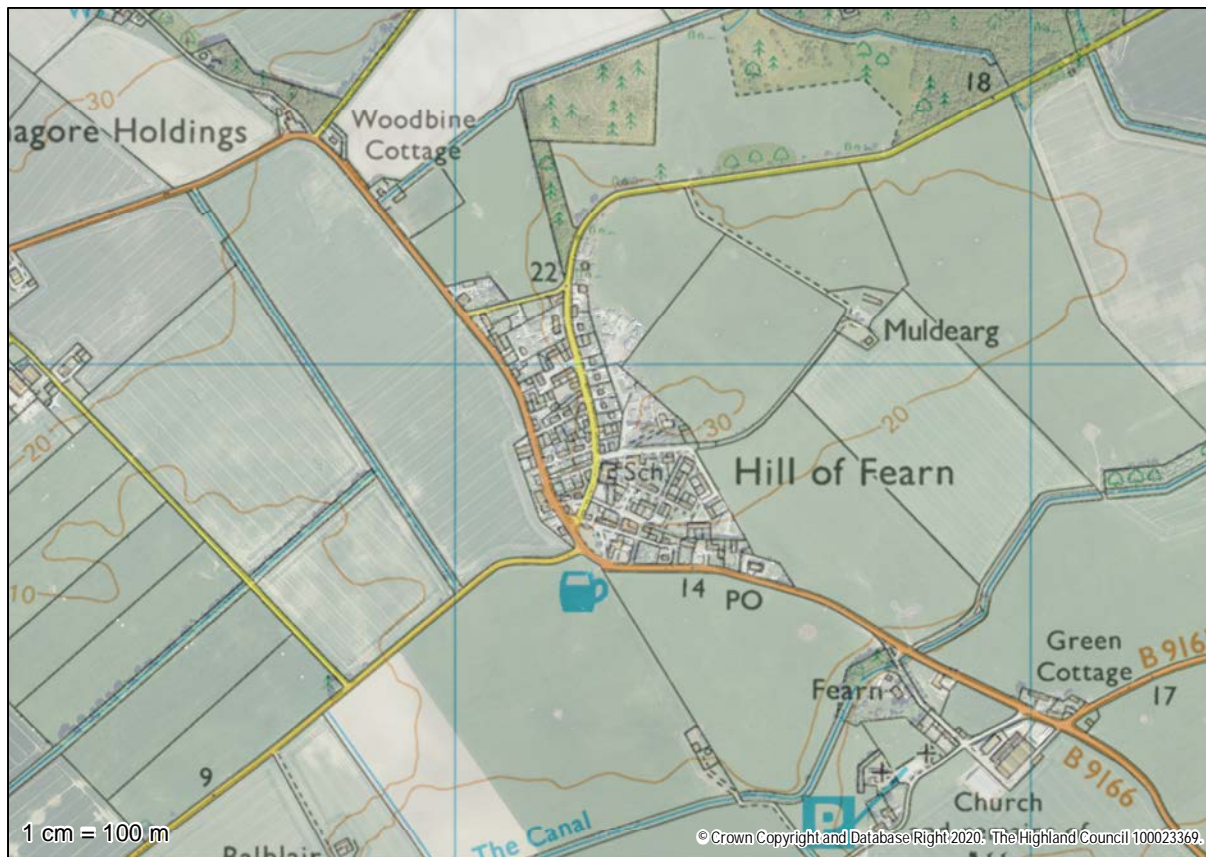
- Gorthleck has seen steady levels of housing development over the last 10 years with most located in a reasonably contained area, approximately 1 km from the school.
- Stratherrick Primary is a slightly more modern school than many other rural schools. As a result it is rated as "fair" in terms of condition and suitability.
- Lack of public drainage system may limit development opportunities.

Placemaking Priorities

- Housing development should continue to be focused in close proximity to the school and typically be infill between existing clusters of development.
- Preserve public views across Loch Mhor.
- Safeguard the pockets of native and ancient woodland from development.
- Further development along side roads will be required to upgrade the roads to adoptable standards.

Hill of Fearn | Cnoc na Manachainn

Map 4.9 Hill of Fearn



Issues

- Hill of Fearn sits on the B9165 approximately 8 km south east of Tain and benefits from views over the countryside towards Nigg and the Seaboard Villages. It is surrounded by flat, good quality prime agricultural land.
- Benefits from a range of facilities including a hotel, shop and butchers, garage, post office, recycling point and a Primary School. Hill of Fearn Primary School is at about 50% capacity and is expected to remain at current levels.
- Fearn Railway station, located on the Far North Line, is around 2km from the village.
- The most recent house building has been at Monks Walk, apart from this there has been limited amounts of housing development. Except for a small line of houses along the western side of B9165 Main Road, the rest of the housing all sits to the north and east of the B9165.

Placemaking Priorities

- Safeguard areas of native and ancient woodland to the north of the village from development.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

- May be opportunity for limited amounts of housing development infill. Older parts of village have some sections of vennels or alleys, these should be preserved.
- Discourage development encroaching in a linear pattern along B9165 Station Road towards Fearn. Equally discourage development to the south of the B9165 Station Road.
- Village green area should be protected from development.

Inver | An t-Inbhir

Map 4.10 Inver



Issues

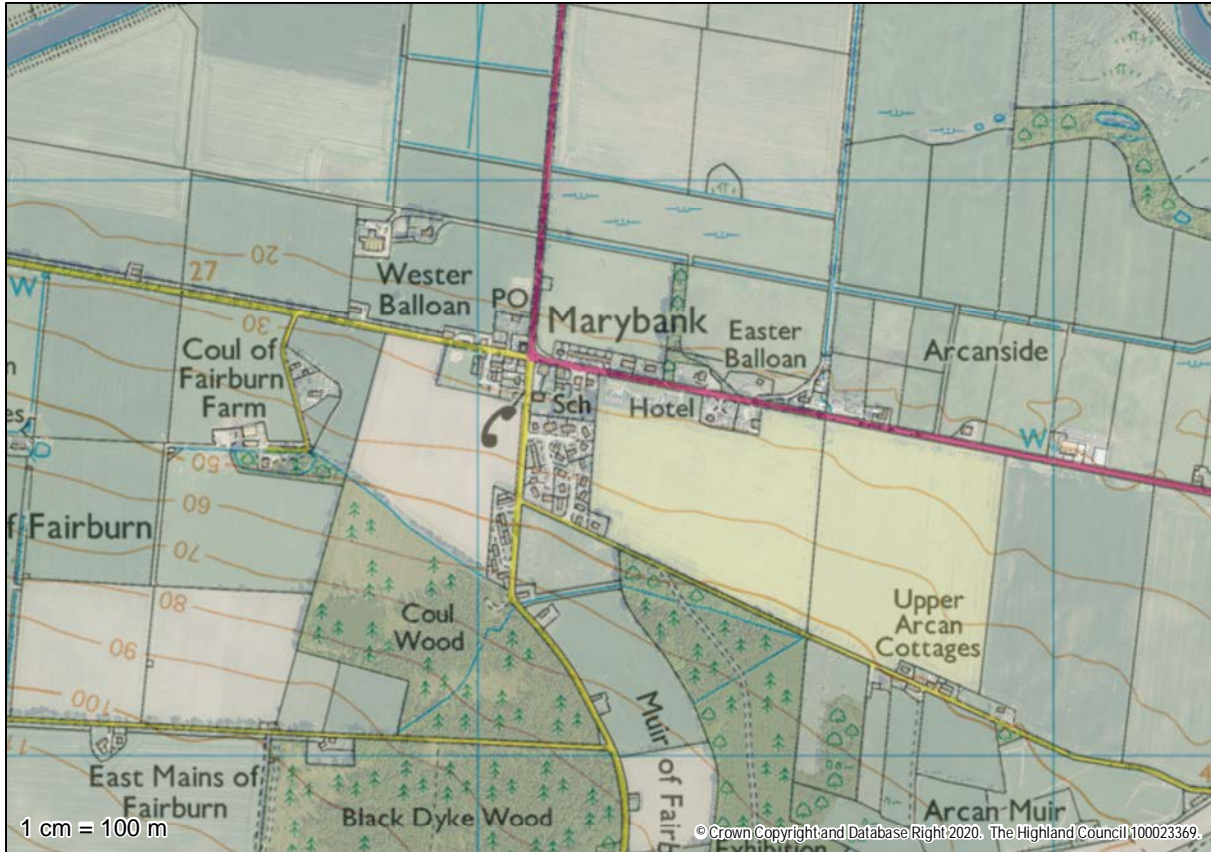
- Clustered settlement with a village hall community hub.
- Small numbers of housing completions in recent years.
- As the village lies on the coast there is potential for flooding and coastal erosion.
- Several Core Paths around the village.
- Inver Primary School is an important community hub, currently sitting at over 70% capacity and forecast to rise to over 80% capacity over the next 15 years.

Placemaking Priorities

- May be development potential to immediate south east of settlement.
- Potential for development along Shore Street heading towards the Primary School.
- Preserve open views to the north over the Morrish More and Dornoch Firth by ensuring adequate distances between houses and preventing infill development on the road between Tain and Portmahomack.

Marybank | Bruach Màiri

Map 4.11 Marybank



Issues

- Marybank is a small clustered village situated at the entrance to Strathconon overlooking the confluence of the Rivers Conon and Blackwater which originally served the sporting estates and farming communities of Strathconon, Fairburn and Balnagown.
- Marybank's location is also a conduit for residents and visitors at the gateway to Strathconon.
- The village sustains a basic level of facilities that includes a primary school and a community hall but has lost its shop and post office.
- Development pressure for multiple house developments is low but an upgrade to the local septic tanks based sewage works should now allow such development.

Placemaking Priorities

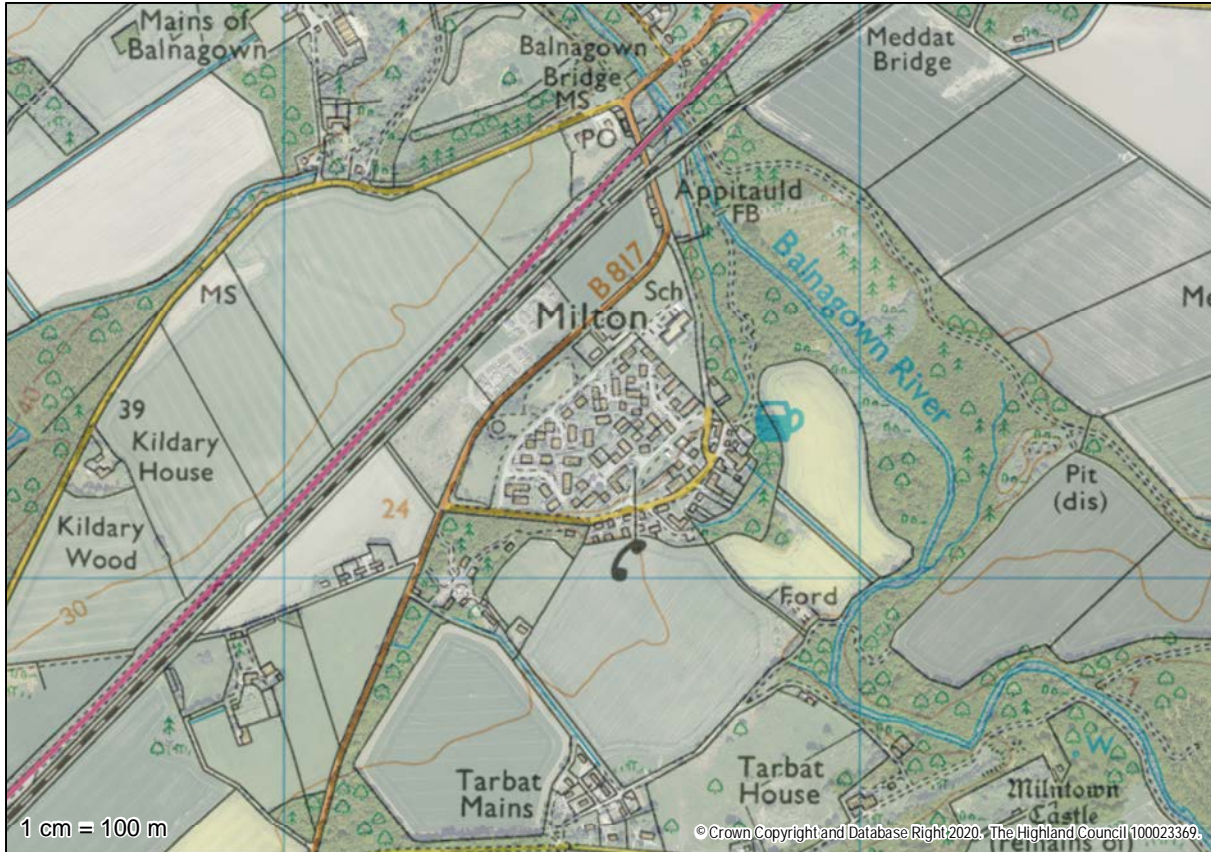
- To support the local community's desire to bring back a village shop facility possibly as an enhancement of facilities at the community hall.
- To protect the stands of mature trees, particularly on roadside verges, that are important to the amenity of Marybank.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

- Subject to addressing these constraints to support clustered expansion of the village most acceptably east of Balloan Road and South of Ord Road.
- To support other development as infill opportunities rather than extending single plot depth “ribbon” development along the frontage of the settlement’s roads as they pass into surrounding open countryside.
- To improve public transport connectivity.

Milton of Kildary | Baile a' Mhuilinn

Map 4.12 Milton of Kildary



Issues

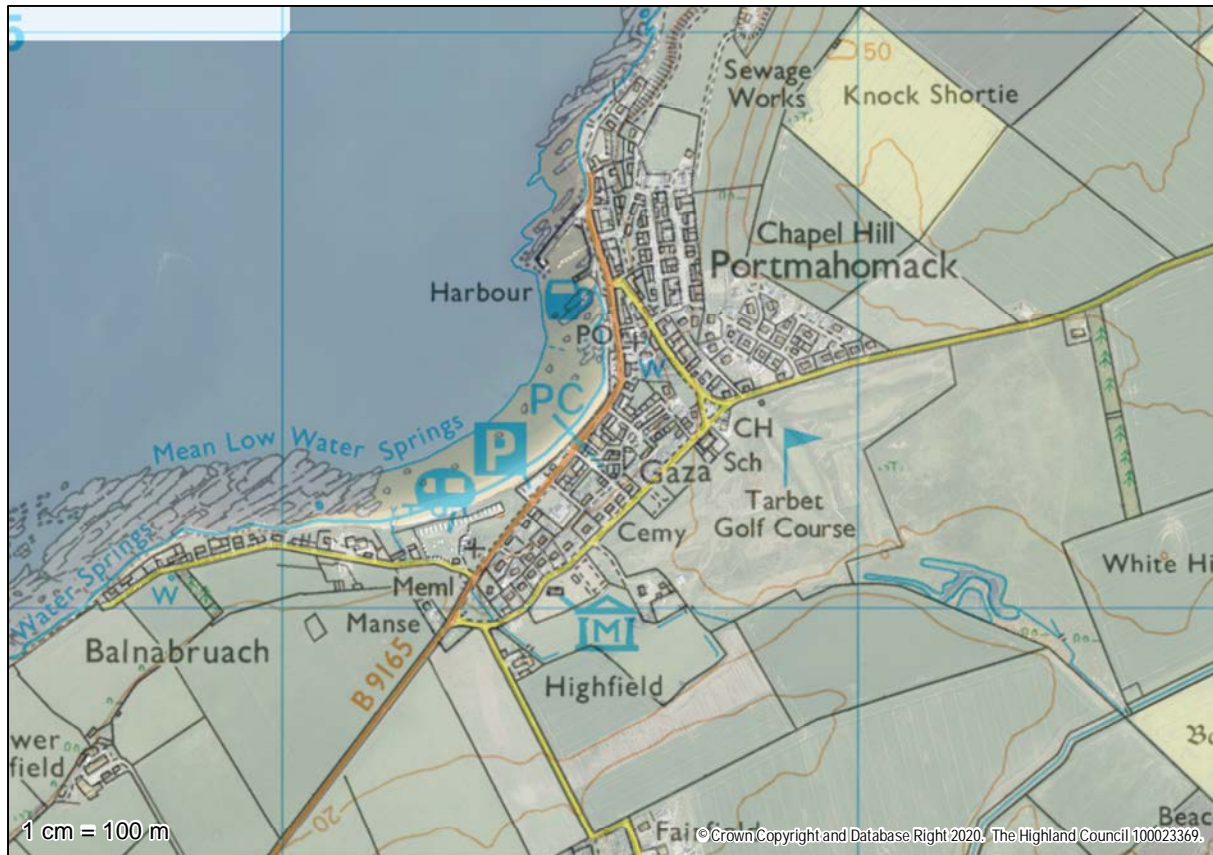
- Milton of Kildary sits just off the A9 trunk road. The Balnagown River flows through the village and it benefits from the attractive backdrop of ancient and native forestry. Balnagown Castle and its Garden and Designed Landscape, provide an attractive wider setting.
- Milton of Kildary offers a primary school, village shop, village inn and community centre. In the heart of the village is the green on which stands a mercat cross.
- Milton Primary School is currently sitting at 60% capacity and is expected to remain at similar levels.
- Sits within the hinterland.
- Small amounts of housebuilding in recent years.
- In recent times the village has suffered from a decrease in bus services which has an impact on residents being able to access employment opportunities elsewhere; there may be opportunities to seek developer contributions towards a Dial-a Bus service.

Placemaking Priorities

- Safeguard areas of native and ancient woodland and the Tree Preservation Order at Balnagown Bridge and East Lodge.
- Protect and where possible enhance access to Core Paths.
- Protect and enhance the village's heritage assets notably the Conservation Area and several listed buildings.

Portmahomack | Port MoCholmaig

Map 4.13 Portmahomack



Issues

- Portmahomack is a picturesque village positioned on the Tarbat peninsula in Easter Ross, around 16km east of Tain. It is situated on a sandy bay and has a small harbour.
- It has a range of services and amenities including a Primary School, Carnegie Hall, shop, post office, golf course several cafes/restaurants and a hotel.
- Tarbat Old Primary School is sitting at over 80% capacity and is expected to remain over and above that level.
- It has a rich built heritage with several listed buildings in the village, mainly along the shore and a Pictish monastic settlement Scheduled Monument, which has been subject to archaeological excavation. The Tarbat Discovery Centre is a local heritage centre and museum.
- There have been relatively few housing completions in recent years.
- As the village lies on the coast there is potential for coastal flooding.
- Surrounded by prime agricultural land.

Placemaking Priorities

- Protect and where possible enhance access to Portmahomack to Tarbatness and Portmahomack to Inver Core Paths.
- Support local community with efforts to enhance the harbour and its facilities.
- Seaward land on the western approach into the village should not be built on to safeguard public views over water.
- Potential for infill development.

Rhicullen/Newmore | Ruighe a' Chuilinn/An Neimh Mhòr

Map 4.14 Rhicullen/Newmore



Issues

- Rhicullen/Newmore is a compact group of housing collected around the Primary School. It is close to two major service centres being only 5km to Invergordon and 6km to Alness.
- Newmore Primary School is sitting at just over 70% capacity and is expected to stay relatively stable with projected increases towards the end of the decade.
- Sits within the hinterland.
- There have been no recent housing completions within the housing group.
- There are known safety and capacity issues at the A9 Tomich junction which will be a growth constraint.

Placemaking Priorities

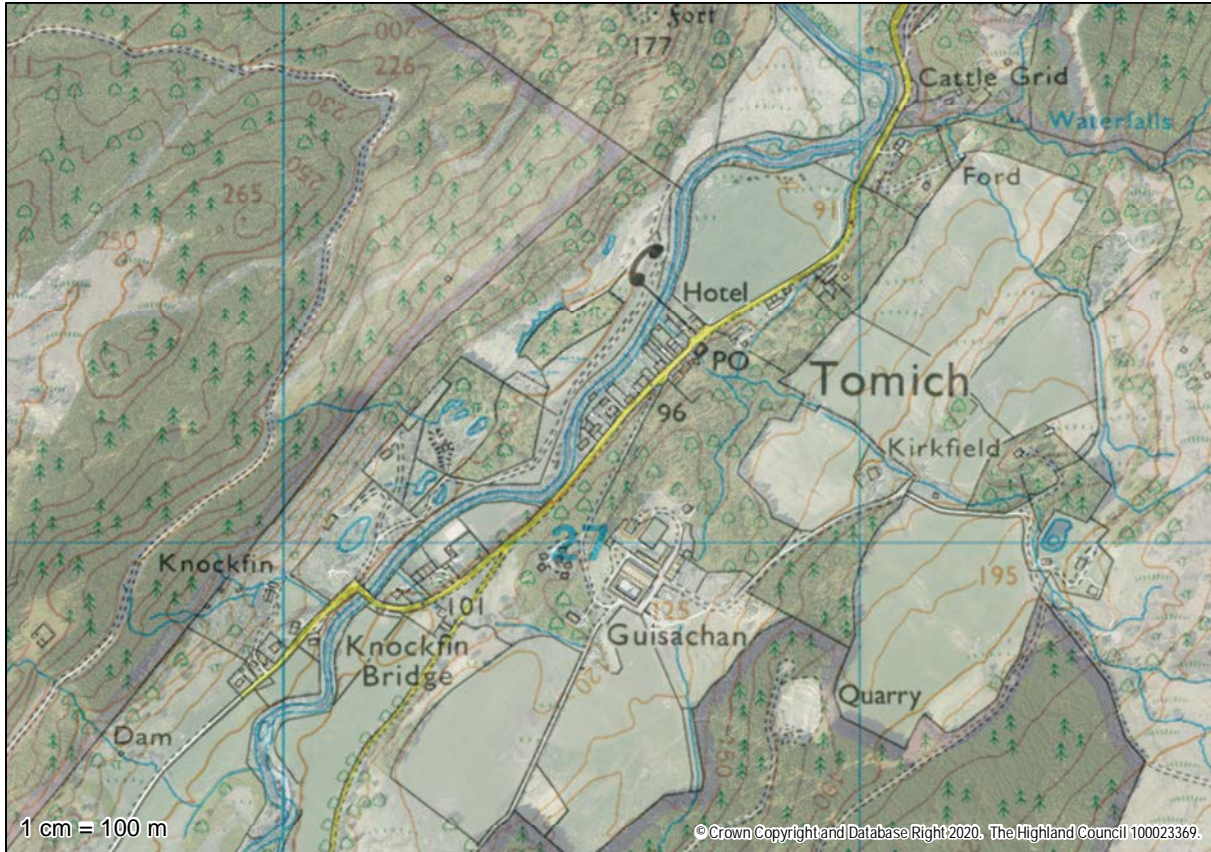
- Any new housing should be clustered around the existing housing group.
- Limit development to consolidation on east-west axis.
- Safeguard areas of native and ancient woodland to the north and south of the village from development.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

- Playing field should be protected from development.
- Rhicullen Training Trenches Scheduled Monument to be safeguarded from development.

Tomich | An Tomaich

Map 4.15 Tomich



Issues

- Tomich is a "planned" conservation village at the heart of the Guisachan Estate and is afforded Conservation Area status which will have a major influence on the design and siting of any development.
- Water and sewerage facilities have limited spare capacity and there are adjoining flood risk areas.
- There are no community facilities although there is a limited hours post office, an hotel and a large self catering complex.
- The village is remote from other settlements and higher order services and therefore not a sustainable location for significant growth.

Placemaking Priorities

- To protect the architectural character of the settlement which is strongly linear in form.

4 Growing Settlements | Tuineachaidhean a' Fàs

- To support limited expansion opportunities that are in keeping with maintaining this linear form.
- To support the further expansion of visitor facilities at Tomich particularly where these are also available to the permanently resident population.

Whitebridge | An Drochaid Bhàn

Map 4.16 Whitebridge



Issues

- Certain areas of land at Whitebridge are at risk of flooding from River Fechlin and Allt Breinbeag.
- Crofting interest to the south at Drummond.
- Both the bridges at Whitebridge are of historical interest with the Old Bridge being A Listed and the New Bridge being B Listed.

Placemaking Priorities

- Safeguard the pockets of native and ancient woodland from development.
- Support the hotel to continue to provide an important role within the community.
- Ensure development respects the setting of the Listed Buildings.

5 Economic Development Areas | Raointean Fàis Eaconamaich

The Main Settlements detail employment land allocations within the Plan area's main towns and villages but there are several other strategic sites which can generate significant job opportunities outwith these settlements that we think should be identified. We call these Economic Development Areas (EDAs) and they are listed and mapped in this section. A set of guiding principles is included for each EDA identified in the Plan. These will be used to guide future development and assist in determining the extent and location of suitable opportunities.

We have chosen not to roll forward previously allocated economic development sites (known as Strategic Employment Sites in the aIMFLDP) at Fendom and Fearn Aerodrome. This is mainly due to concerns over their deliverability as we are not aware of any significant commercial interest or potential future development pressures.

Two bids were made at Call for Sites stage for tourism and leisure related developments at land near Nigg Yard and Kildary. Instead of allocating these sites, a more general reference has been made in the Growing Sustainable Tourism sector to the wider opportunities which exist in Easter Ross to bolster the tourism industry. If full planning permission is granted then we may consider allocating them in the future.

Castle Stuart Caisteal Stiùbhart	Page 261
Fort George Gearastan Dheòrsa	Page 263
Highland Deephaven Deephaven na Gàidhealtachd	Page 265
Inverness Airport Business Park Pàirc Gnìomhachais Port-adhair Inbhir Nis	Page 267
Nigg Energy Park Pàirc Cumhachd Nigg	Page 269
Whiteness Whiteness	Page 271

Castle Stuart | Caisteal Stiùbhart

Issues

- Permission granted in 2006 for 2 championship golf courses and a range of leisure facilities, including 141 tourist lodges and apartments, 75 bed luxury hotel and spa and office space.
- First phase was completed in 2009 which included Castle Stuart Golf Links course and iconic Art Deco style clubhouse.

Placemaking Priorities

- Create a golf course resort of outstanding quality and repute that complements the rich fabric of golf in the Highlands and benefits the local area.
- Ensure suitable improvements to the transport network and encourage sustainable modes of travel to and from neighboring settlements.

Map 5.1 Castle Stuart



Economic Development Area

CS01

Name: Castle Stuart

Use(s): Mixed Use (Business, Leisure, Tourism)

There is a well established long term vision for Castle Stuart which, as part of the first phase of development, has seen the creation of a world renowned golf course. We continue to support the remaining phases of development.

Fort George | Gearastan Dheòrsa

Issues

- Fort George is one of the most imposing and well known military barracks in the UK and provides both an ongoing military function and well established tourist attraction.
- Ministry of Defence (MoD) announced in 2017 the closure of the military base by 2032, after 250 years of service. It is likely that the training area will not be surplus to MoD requirements.
- Currently designated as a Scheduled Monument but may be reclassified as part of military base closure.
- Located just over a mile to the north of Ardersier with its only vehicular access available through the centre of the village.

Placemaking Priorities

- All development must respect the historical integrity of Fort George and its Scheduled Monument listing.
- Securing a suitable future use will be important for the economic and social prosperity of the local area.
- Transport Assessment to assess the impact of and identify suitable mitigation measures relating to any conversion proposals at Fort George, particularly in relation to potential increased congestion on the High Street in Ardersier, measures to discourage increased traffic on back road routes, improved active travel connections between Fort George and Ardersier and bus infrastructure.
- It is considered that mainstream housing is not suitable for the Fort due to the physical nature of the site and its limited access to facilities.

Map 5.2 Fort George



Economic Development Area

FG01

Name: Fort George

Use(s): Mixed Use (Community, Business, Tourism, Retail)

Fort George is preferred as an Economic Development Area to support and promote its reuse if and when it becomes decommissioned as a military base.

Highland Deephaven | Deephaven na Gàidhealtachd

Issues

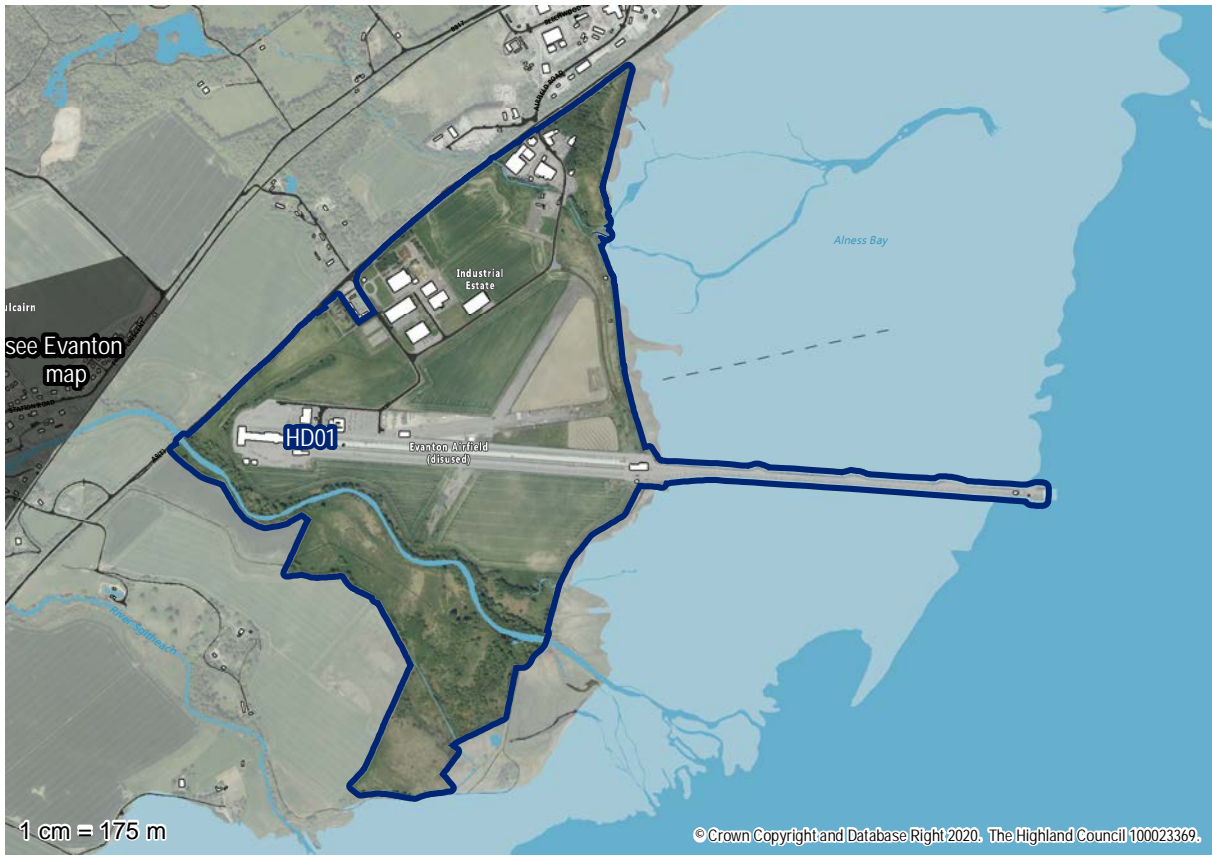
- A former WWII airfield which is partly occupied by a number of well established industrial and commercial units together with large areas of flat open land which is currently used for agricultural purposes.
- The largest single occupier is Technip UK which has a purpose built spoolbase, specialising in advanced pipeline fabrication for pipelay vessels servicing the Offshore industry.
- Excellent transport links to the A9 Trunk Road and marine access to the Cromarty Firth.
- As set out in 1.2.2 'Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy', the [Opportunity Cromarty Firth](https://opportunitycromartyfirth.co.uk/)⁽⁶⁰⁾ project presents a range of major opportunities for Highland. We will be considering the potential benefits for Highland Deephaven in more detail but we expect it could help attract new businesses to the area leading to commercial development and job opportunities.

Placemaking Priorities

- Capacity to accommodate significant industrial development and assist in the economic development of the regional economy.
- Scope for improvement of facilities including a potential for new rail halt and sidings to be formed to serve the industrial operations, jetty extension and marine frontage.
- Development visible from the A9 should be designed to a high standard of architectural design and/or provide high quality landscaping to lessen the visual impact.
- Avoid adverse impact on the Cromarty Firth SPA/Ramsar or Moray Firth SAC.

60 <https://opportunitycromartyfirth.co.uk/>

Map 5.3 Highland Deephaven



Economic Development Area

Table 6 HD01

Name: Highland Deephaven

Use(s): Industry

Highland Deephaven is a well established industrial estate which has potential to play an increasingly important role in the future economic development of the area. Whilst there are concerns about the effectiveness of the land to the south of the Allt Grad burn, we are continuing to support it at this stage as it may be more likely to be developed if the Opportunity Cromarty Firth freeport bid is successful.

Inverness Airport Business Park | Pàirc Gnìomhachais Port-adhair Inbhir Nis

Issues

- Inverness Airport Business Park includes 200 ha of land set out for business and enterprise uses, with recent completions including a 130 bed hotel, regional distribution centre and modern, flexible industrial units.
- Council owned Dalcross Industrial Estate, which lies to the west of the airport, is well established and is currently fully built out and at capacity.
- Located beside the region's main hub airport, alongside the A96 and near to the A9 trunk road.
- A new railway station on the main Inverness to Aberdeen line is due to be completed by 2022/2023.

Placemaking Priorities

- Continue to support business and industrial development and promote the site as a leading commercial hub for the Highlands.
- Maximise opportunities to create competitive and attractive year-round active travel connections within the sites and to/from the new Dalcross Train Station. To deliver high quality active travel connections which reflect the ambitious long term vision for the wider area, developer contributions should be sought from all developments to enable specific projects to come forward, such as sheltered/covered walkways and EV shuttle buses.
- Consider solutions to the ongoing shortages of parking within the Industrial Estate and informal parking problems. This should include investment in options for making other forms of transport more competitive.
- Expansion of Dalcross Industrial Estate would help address the shortage of industrial land in the wider Inverness area.

Map 5.4 Inverness Airport and Business Park



Economic Development Area

IA01

Name: Inverness Airport and Business Park **Use(s):** Business and Industry

IA02

Name: Dalcross Industrial Estate Expansion **Use(s):** Industry

Inverness Airport and Business Park is allocated as it represents a strategic employment hub which benefits from being alongside trunk road and rail routes and within close proximity to urban centres.

We are also supporting the expansion of Dalcross Industrial Estate on easy to access, flat land to the north which is in Council ownership.

Nigg Energy Park | Pàirc Cumhachd Nigg

Issues

- One of the UK's most important energy industry facilities which offers multi sector capability, combining some of the largest dry dock and construction and assembly workshops in Europe and over 900 metres of deepwater quayside.
- Work was undertaken in 2015 to upgrade and extend the south quay which enhanced Nigg's ability to attract North Sea oil related work and renewable energy related contracts.
- The [Nigg Development Masterplan](#)⁽⁶¹⁾, adopted as statutory Supplementary Guidance in 2013, sets out a vision for the former fabrication yard, oil terminal and land to the east of the B9175. Stakeholders, including the port operators, Global Energy, consider the masterplan outdated in certain aspects, particularly in relation to the areas allocated for expansion beyond the extent of the existing yard. We do not intend to carry forward a 'hook' for the Masterplan in the new plan and the revised allocation will ultimately provide an update to the existing allocation boundaries.
- Much of the land east of the B9175 has recently been purchased by a new owner who has plans to create a world class golf course on the land. The extent to which land to the east of the B9175 is effective for industrial development is therefore unclear and work is continuing with all stakeholders to agree a revised allocation boundary which satisfies both parties.
- A number of residential properties are located within close proximity to the yard and adjoin the existing and proposed expansion areas.
- As set out in 1.2.2 'Supporting a strong, diverse and sustainable economy', the [Opportunity Cromarty Firth](#)⁽⁶²⁾ project presents a range of major opportunities for Highland. For Nigg Energy Park in particular the creation of an advanced manufacturing plant would not only strengthen the supply chain and allow for a more sustainable pipeline of work and employment but reinforce its role as an international hub for renewable energy projects.

Placemaking Priorities

- Continue to support the expansion of Nigg as a strategically important, multi-user industrial facility.
- Deliver the new East Quay at Nigg Energy Park and the formation of laydown area for handling and temporary storage of large components for the oil and gas and renewables industries.
- Redevelop the oil terminal which lies to the north of the existing Energy Park when the current tenant's contact expires in 2025.

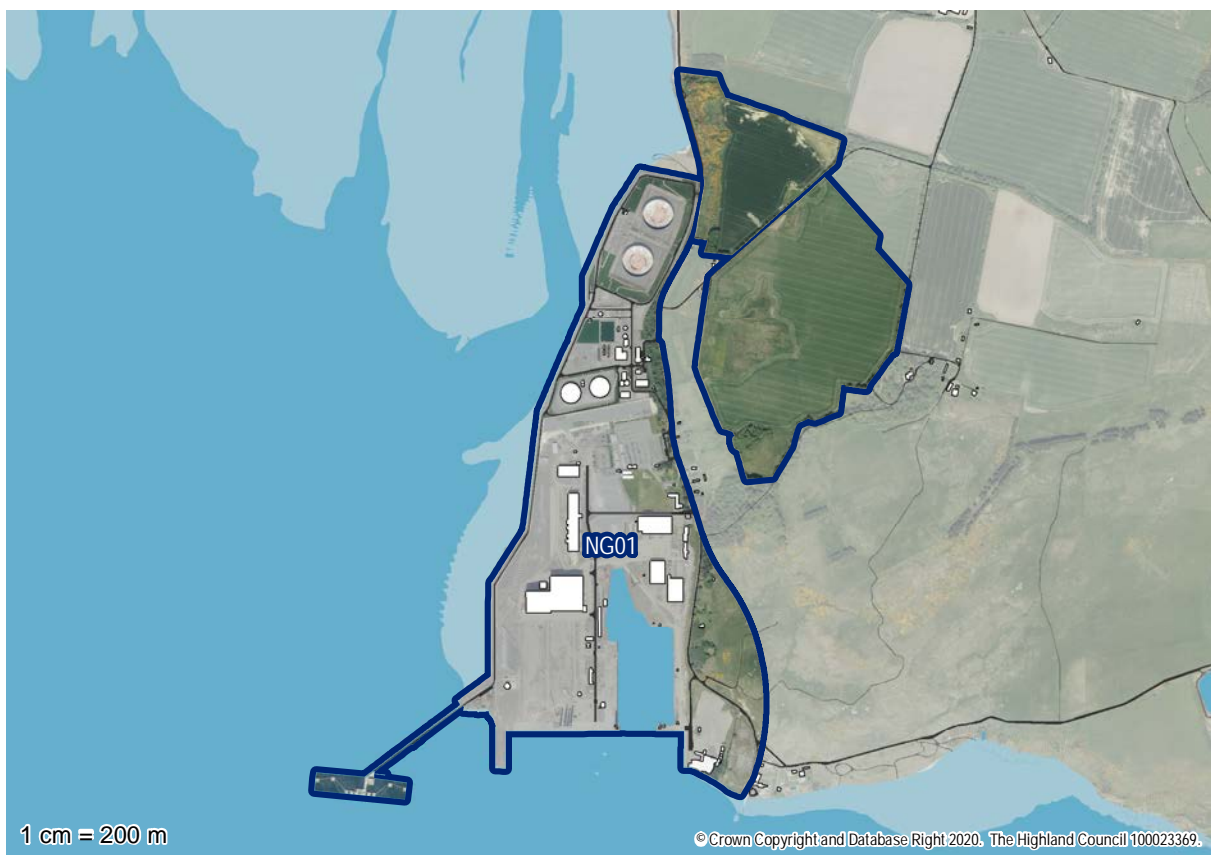
61 https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/209/nigg_development_master_plan

62 <https://opportunitycromartyfirth.co.uk/>

5 Economic Development Areas | Raointean Fàis Eaconamaich

- Attract an advanced manufacturing operator in order to boost employment opportunities and establish a more sustainable pipeline of work and strengthen the supply chain.
- Safeguard suitable land to the east of the B9175 which is effective for potential long term expansion of industrial operations.
- Minimise levels of noise and light pollution during construction and operation stages.
- Avoid adverse impact on the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated for its population of bottlenose dolphins and Dornoch Firth and Morrich More Special Area of Conservation designated for its harbour seals.

Map 5.5 Nigg Energy Park



Economic Development Area

NG01

Name: Nigg Energy Park

Use(s): Industry

Nigg is preferred for industrial development as it continues to offer significant potential for the wider economy and delivering the ambitions of the Opportunity Cromarty Firth project.

Whiteness | Whiteness

Issues

- At 160ha, the former fabrication yard is one of the largest brownfield sites within the Inner Moray Firth area, having laid vacant for 20 years.
- As an employment hub it would be located within close proximity to main centres of population, including Ardersier, Nairn, Tornagrain and Inverness.
- Its coastal position results in parts of the site being at risk of flooding - detailed assessment and mitigation may be required.
- The site benefits from direct access to the A96 trunk road and marine access. However, relatively regular dredging is required to maintain its deep water capabilities.
- The current owners are seeking renewal of the mixed use permission which is due to expire this year. This proposal, which was reflective of the policy position in HwLDP (adopted in 2012), includes the construction of nearly 2,000 homes, a new school, marina, hotel and health club. This would essentially mean the creation of a "new town" requiring significant levels of new infrastructure. The IMFLDP (2015) allocated the site for industrial uses only. We want the new Plan to provide a clear and updated position on what land uses will be accepted.

Placemaking Priorities

- Promote the redevelopment of the site to form a strategically important industrial and energy hub.
- Enhance connections between the site and the neighboring communities.
- Avoid adverse impact on the population of bottlenose dolphins of the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and common seal of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC, the Inner Moray Firth Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Moray Firth proposed SPA.

Map 5.6 Whiteness



Economic Development Area

WH01

Name: Whiteness

Use(s): Industry

We are preferring Whiteness for industrial uses as it is a large scale brownfield site with good access to the A96 and the Moray Firth. We are not supporting it for a mix of residential, tourism and community uses as there are better alternative and more sustainable options within the Plan area.

Appendix 1: Glossary | Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair

We try to minimise the amount of jargon in our planning documents but the use of some technical language is unavoidable. This section contains a list of abbreviations, acronyms and terms used in this Plan and in the related background documents and an explanation of their origin and/or meaning. Please note the explanations given are not intended as legal definitions of the planning terms used.

Abbreviations/Acronyms

aIMFLDP: the current adopted Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2015

LDP: Local Development Plan

HoNDA: Housing Need and Demand Assessment

HIE: Highlands and Islands Enterprise

HRA: Habitats Regulations Appraisal

HwLDP: the Highland wide Local Development Plan 2012

NSA: National Scenic Area

SAC: Special Area of Conservation

SDA: Settlement Development Area

SEPA: Scottish Environment Protection Agency

SLA: Special Landscape Area

SNH: Scottish Natural Heritage

SPA: Special Protection Area

SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest

SuDS: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

SG: Supplementary Guidance

Appendix 1: Glossary | Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair

Terms

A

Action Programme: A working document developed in consultation with key investment stakeholders and sets out, in very broad terms, how and by whom the key elements of the Local Development Plan will be implemented.

Affordable Housing: Broadly defined as housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes. In some places the market can provide this but usually it is necessary to make housing available at a cost below market value to meet an identified need with the support of public subsidy.

Allocations: Land specifically identified in a Local Development Plan as appropriate for a specific use or mix of uses.

Active Travel Plans: Plans which help establish a network for walking, cycling and access to public transport. These identify a core active travel network and prioritised actions in certain settlement locations which serve as a framework for future investment and new development.

B

Brownfield Land: Land which has previously been developed. The term may cover vacant or derelict land, land occupied by redundant or underutilised buildings, and other developed land in a settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable.

C

Carbon CLEVER: An initiative aimed at achieving a carbon neutral Inverness and a low carbon Highlands by 2025, toward which the Council has committed resources from its capital budget.

Charrette: Intensive planning session where citizens, designers and importantly the community collaborate to prepare a single vision for a site/development. The sessions also provide a forum for ideas and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers. More importantly, it allows everyone who participates to be a mutual author of the plan.

Council's Capital Programme: The Highland Council's programme of capital expenditure on specific infrastructure projects and services.

Core Path Plans: A document that details and maps the most important local network of paths in our area called core paths. The paths cater for all types of users, for example walkers, cyclists, horse riders, and people with disabilities.

D

Design and Access Statements A Design and Access Statement is a document containing both a design statement and a written statement about how issues relating to access to a proposed development for people with disabilities, have been dealt with. The statement will explain the policy approach and how any specific issues, which might affect access to the development for disabled people, have been addressed. It will also state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken and what account has been taken of the outcome of any consultation.

Design Statements It should be noted that a design statement need not be an elaborate and complex process. Design statements can be a short document of one or two pages that sets out the principles on which a development is based. A design statement can be prepared for large or small developments and it should explain how a design and how a layout proposal has been chosen – what has influenced that design? A design statement enables the designer or applicant to explain why the selected design solution is the best and most suitable choice in terms of the building's design, layout, materials and the space around the building. A design statement can be applied to a single building in the countryside or to multiple buildings within more densely populated areas.

Design Review Panel: A group of local built environment professionals who provide free design advice to development teams preparing planning applications for major or locally significant developments with the aim of raising the quality of development which will assist in creating sustainable and better places. Projects will be referred to the Design Review Panel as set out in the Panel's Terms of Reference. Reports of the Design Review Panel will be material considerations in the assessment of planning applications and applicants will be expected to demonstrate that their proposal has responded to the relevant Panel report.

Developer contributions: These planning obligations provide a means of ensuring that developers contribute towards the infrastructure and services needed to make proposed developments acceptable in terms of land use planning. Contributions may be made as financial payments or as direct works.

Development Brief: A development brief provides an assessment of constraints and opportunities presented by a site and the type of development expected or encouraged, based on this assessment. A brief will provide guidance on key elements that any development should incorporate, with

Appendix 1: Glossary | Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair

reference to appropriate Scottish Planning Policy and Local Development Plan Policies where necessary. A brief may include details on function, layout, plot sizes, building heights, building lines and materials etc. A brief can often precede and inform a design statement or master plan. They may be prepared by the Council for certain sites, however, it will more often be expected that prospective developers will prepare briefs and agree these with the Council in advance of a planning application being submitted. The Brief will be a material consideration in the decision making process.

District Heating Network: District heating is a means of delivering heat from a point of generation to end users – homes, offices, leisure centre, and other users of heat. A district heating scheme generally consists of: a heat source, often in the form of a dedicated central energy centre, and a network of insulated pipes used to deliver heat, in the form of water or steam. They provide efficient generation and distribution of heat, helping to secure a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions in comparison to conventional heating approaches⁽⁶³⁾.

Development Plan: Sets out how we think land should be used over the next few years. By law the Council need to produce a Development Plan for its area.

E

Economic Development Areas: These refer to places, outwith the main settlements, which we believe should be developed over the Plan period and contribute to the local economy.

Energy from Waste: Energy that is recovered by thermally treating waste.

European Protected Species: Species of animal and plant listed respectively in Schedule 2 and Schedule 4 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 as amended.

Energy Statement: An Energy Statement will be informed by heat map information, and include an assessment of whether a district heating solution is viable or feasible for the development. An Energy Statement will also identify any available sources of heat or other factors such as where land should be safeguarded for future district heating infrastructure. An Energy Statement will be required where indicated in the developer requirements for particular sites and preparation of an Energy Statement will be encouraged for other sites, particularly if provision of or connection to a district heating network is being considered.

63 Scottish Cities Alliance – “district heating” planning policy and guidance workstream

G

Green Economy: A green economy is defined as low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. In a green economy, growth in employment and income are driven by public and private investment into such economic activities, infrastructure and assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency, and prevention of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Greenfield Land: Land (or a defined site) which has previously never been built on.

Green networks are different from greenspaces. They may serve one or more of the same functions as greenspaces but in a less formal or more strategic way. Green networks provide the physical, visual and habitat connections for greenspaces and therefore ensure accessibility for both wildlife and people. Development can be more flexibly accommodated within or adjacent to a green network as long as the network's connectivity and integrity is maintained and it is incorporated into a development as a positive landscape and design feature.

Greenspace: are the mapped areas in the Plan that have formal protection from development. They are the discrete and easily identifiable green and blue (waterside or waterbody) spaces that contribute to the character and setting of a place and provide amenity, biodiversity, recreation benefits as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation opportunities. Greenspaces may overlap with areas designated for other purposes such as Conservation Areas or environmentally protected places such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Growing Settlements: These refer to settlements which we think would benefit from a set of guiding factors to direct development to the best locations rather than setting it out as a Settlement Development Area boundary and specifically delineated site allocations. This should provide a greater level of flexibility in these settlements.

H

Highlands and Islands Enterprise: The Scottish Government's economic and community development agency for the Highlands and Islands.

Highland-wide Local Development Plan: This is the overarching Development Plan document, which sets the strategy and vision for the whole Highland area (excluding the area covered by the Cairngorms National Park which has its own local development plan) and sets out how land can be used by developers for the next 20 years.

Appendix 1: Glossary | Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair

Hinterland Area: Area of countryside around Inverness and the Ross-shire major work centres that falls under pressure from commuter driven housing development.

Housing Market Area: A geographical area which is relatively self-contained in terms of where house purchasers and sellers move to and from.

Housing Need and Demand Assessment: Provides the methodology and evidence base to estimate future housing requirements over the next 20 years for both affordable housing and private market housing.

I

Infrastructure: The basic services and facilities needed to support development. These include road access and water and sewerage facilities and green infrastructure, e.g. landscaping, green networks, open spaces, and paths. More widely, it can also include community infrastructure such as schools and other community facilities.

K

Key Agency: A national or regional organisation that has an important role in planning for the future of an area. Key Agencies are defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.

L

Local Place Plans: a new type of plan giving local communities an opportunity to develop proposals for the development and use of land for their communities. Local Place Plans are intended to stimulate and encourage local community debate about the future of a place, enabling communities to focus on their aspirations as well as their needs. Local Place Plan(s) will be adopted as Supplementary Guidance where they meet the following criteria:

1. Accords with the provisions of the Local Development Plan;
2. Reflects the land use allocations contained within the Local Development Plan and does not propose alternative uses for these allocations which would be contrary to the Plan;
3. Reflects the aspirations of the Local Development Plan, through the Placemaking Policy, to create and deliver high quality and successful places;

4. A place based assessment of the area has been undertaken and provides justification for any development or improvement proposals;
5. A spatial map detailing the Communities' aspirations for their Place; and
6. The Local Place Plan has been subject to significant and wide-ranging engagement and consultation with different ages, groups and individuals within that community or communities.

Low and Zero Carbon Technologies: Low and zero carbon technologies (LZCTs) provide space and water heating and electricity through renewable technologies or combined heat and power (CHP), which are retrofitted or integral to the building or community.

M

Masterplan: A masterplan comprises three dimensional images and text describing how an area will be developed. Its scope can range from strategic planning to small scale groups of buildings. Most commonly, they describes and maps an overall development concept which may include present and future land use; urban design and landscaping; built form; infrastructure; circulation and service provision. They are based on an understanding of place and it is intended to provide a structured approach to creating a clear and consistent framework for development. The Council expects Masterplans to be provided for:

- All allocations within the Local Development Plan which specific a MasterPlan requirement;
- Major or smaller complex development sites;
- Sites that are within a sensitive area, such as a Conservation Area; and
- Sites that are likely to have significant impacts on the environment.

Masterplans for these sites are required to set out a phasing and delivery strategy which is realistic to market conditions.

Material consideration: Matters we must consider when making a decision on a planning application. Scottish Government guidance states that there are two main tests in deciding whether a consideration is material and relevant and advises as follows: "It should serve or be related to the purpose of planning. It should therefore relate to the development and use of land; and It should fairly and reasonably relate to the particular application. It is for the decision maker to decide if a consideration is material and to assess both the weight to be attached to each material consideration and whether individually or together they are sufficient to outweigh the development plan. Where development plan policies are not directly relevant to the development proposal, material considerations will be of particular importance". Whether a consideration is material is a matter that may ultimately be decided by the courts when required.

Appendix 1: Glossary | Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair

Mitigation: Actions taken to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for any adverse effects or maximise any positive effects associated with a development.

Modal Shift: A change in people's means of travel, normally towards more sustainable transport such as cycling, or public transport. An example would be when somebody stops travelling to and from work by car and starts using public transport.

N

National Planning Framework: Is the Scottish Government's strategy for Scotland's long term spatial development.

National Scenic Area: Areas of nationally important landscape with special qualities that are designated for safeguarding and enhancement through national and local policy.

P

Placemaking Audit: Highland Council developed Audit approach for developments of 4 or more residential units which places the onus on the developer to initially assess their own proposal against the six qualities of successful places embedded in Scottish Planning Policy 2014, namely; distinctive, safe and pleasant, welcoming, adaptable, resource efficient and easy to move around and beyond. The Audit adopts a two tier methodology for assessment, with either a criteria being "Essential" or "Desirable" (Placemaking Audit outlined in Appendix 3). Where criterion cannot be met, it is for the developer to provide justification and evidence as to why. If an "essential" criterion is not complied with, the application may not be supported. Developments must show (preferably through the pre-application process) that criterion are being considered and addressed at an early stage, helping to prevent poorly designed schemes progressing. The Placemaking Audit "Essential" criteria are a collation of current Government and Council advice; whilst the "Desirable" criteria are considered to be emerging good practice in urban design.

Placemaking Priorities: These are important considerations for how a settlement can grow and be enhanced in order that it functions well and is an attractive place to live. These priorities will help to guide decisions on individual development and investment proposals.

Planning Obligations and other legal agreements: Planning obligations (previously known as developer contributions or planning agreements) are a mechanism used to secure physical works or financial payments to the Council, or another agency, to contribute towards additional

infrastructure or improved services. These relate to improvements necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. Planning obligations are a form of contract. The most common type is an agreement under Section 75 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) act 1997, as amended, and are only necessary to secure the obligations and where successors in title need to be bound by the required obligation. For example, where phased contributions to infrastructure are required. In other instances, other legal agreements can be used where one-off financial payments are made in advance of planning permission being issued.

Pre-Application Advice: We encourage and welcome the opportunity to provide pre-application advice before the submission of a formal planning application. We offer three levels of pre-application advice namely:-

1. [Local Small Scale Pre-applications](#)⁽⁶⁴⁾ - for 1 - 3 houses and other types of local development.
2. [Local Medium Scale Pre-applications](#)⁽⁶⁵⁾ - medium-scale developments e.g. housing developments between 4 to 49 units, commercial development and other types of development.
3. [Major Pre-application Advice](#)⁽⁶⁶⁾ – see our [Definition of a major development](#)⁽⁶⁷⁾ for the full list. e.g. 50 or more houses, the total area of the site is 2 hectares or more.

We also offer pre-application advice for [Listed Buildings](#)⁽⁶⁸⁾ and for those proposed changes to these buildings which will require planning permission.

For all types of pre-application advice the Council charges a fee to cover the costs and the current fees can be found at [Other Planning and Environment Fees and Charges document](#)⁽⁶⁹⁾.

R

Renewables: Technologies that utilise renewable sources for energy generation.

64 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/205/planning_-_policies_advice_and_service_levels/785/pre-application_advice/2

65 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/205/planning_-_policies_advice_and_service_levels/785/pre-application_advice/3

66 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/205/planning_-_policies_advice_and_service_levels/785/pre-application_advice/4

67 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/579/major_developments

68 http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/192/planning_-_listed_buildings_and_conservation_areas/174/listed_buildings

69 http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/20630/other_planning_and_environment_fees_and_charges_-_applicable_as_of_1_april_2019

Appendix 1: Glossary | Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair

Reinstatement: A process of returning land and/or buildings to a state comparable to that prior to development/degradation.

Restoration: A process of returning land and/or buildings to an acceptable state following development.

S

Scheme Design Codes: A design guide produced for a particular site/development which establishes a set of rules/codes designers have to follow in terms of; shopfront design, signage, house design, finishes and layout. The codes can be produced by the Council, land-owner or developer.

Sequential Approach: The sequential approach requires developers to search for a site for their proposal starting with the locations that the Plan deems most acceptable in planning terms and then only if those can be demonstrated to be unsuitable, moving on to consider sequentially less acceptable locations. For example, developers of large scale retail developments are required to look first of all at City and town centre locations.

Settlement Development Area: A delineated boundary that reflect the built up area and allocated expansion areas for a main settlement. These settlement envelopes are the preferred areas for most types of development.

Site of Special Scientific Interest: Sites which are areas of land and water (to the seaward limits of local authority areas) that Scottish Natural Heritage considers to best represent our natural heritage - its diversity of plants, animals and habitats, rocks and landforms, or a combination of such natural features. They are the essential building blocks of Scotland's protected areas for nature conservation. Many are also designated as Natura sites. SNH designates SSSIs under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

Special Area of Conservation: A protected site designated under the EC Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC). Special Areas of Conservation are classified for habitats and species (excluding birds) listed in Annexes of the Habitats Directive (as amended) which are considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level. These sites, together with Special Protection Areas, are called Natura sites.

Appendix 1: Glossary | Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair

Special Landscape Area: A regionally significant landscape. These are areas where the scenery is highly valued locally and have been designated by the Council to ensure that the landscape is not damaged by inappropriate development and in some cases encourage positive landscape management.

Special Protection Area: A protected site classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC). Special Protection Areas are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory bird species. These sites, together with Special Areas of Conservation, are called Natura sites.

(Environmentally) Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs - i.e. development that doesn't erode the current stock of environmental resources.

U

Uses: Each allocation includes one or more, specified, acceptable land uses. Where relevant the corresponding permissible use(s) taken from The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes)(Scotland) Order 1997 is/are defined below:

- Housing: Class 9 Houses (but may also allow Class 8 Residential institutions).
 - Business: Class 4 Business (but may also allow ancillary storage or distribution uses).
 - Tourism: Various Classes, dependent upon site circumstances.
 - Industry: Class 4 Business, Class 5 General Industrial, Class 6 Storage or Distribution.
 - Community: Class 10 Non residential institutions (but may also including other public facilities such as sports pitches).
 - Retail: Class 1 Shops (but Plan text may restrict scale and type of retailing).
 - Additional Uses are included for allocations where specific developments are being supported, e.g. student accommodation.
-

W

Waste Facility: Facilities for the sorting, recycling, treatment and/or disposal of municipal and commercial waste.

Wider Countryside: All countryside located outwith the defined Hinterland area.

Appendix 1: Glossary | Eàrr-ràdh 1: Beag-fhaclair

Windfall: Development on land not specifically allocated for this purpose within the Development Plan.

The Highland Council Placemaking Audit

Design Quality	Ambition	Requirement
Distinctive		
D1	The development, when completed is designed to create a distinctive high quality sense of place, which respects and enhances the existing site, locale and landscape features and avoids heavily engineered proposals.	Essential
D2	The development protects important and distinctive buildings and natural heritage assets within or in proximity to the site. It maintains views of existing landmarks and landscapes and follows the principles in Creating Places ⁽¹⁾ .	Essential
D3	Developments at the edge of settlements provide a positive distinction between the urban and rural environments and create a sense of arrival into the urban area.	Essential
D4	Within or close to built heritage designations, the built form, material finish and palette of buildings and hard landscaping protects and enhances the traditional local character and design.	Essential
D5	Development makes use of innovative designs, "Passive House" design criteria, off-site construction techniques and/or modern methods of construction.	Desirable
D6	External material selection is appropriate for the highland climate and is chosen to respect and enhance its wider setting,	Essential
D7	Potential for personalisation of individual properties by prospective owners.	Desirable
D8	Within Inverness City, major or locally significant developments have been presented to the Inverness Design Review Panel ⁽²⁾ and the outcomes respected.	Desirable
D9	Ground floor commercial unit's shopfronts to conform to the Council Shopfront Design Guide ⁽³⁾ .	Essential
Safe and Pleasant		
S1	Active frontages, including "corner turner" style houses, overlook well-lit streets, footpaths and open/green spaces, resulting in natural surveillance using outwards facing perimeter blocks along key routes.	Essential
S2	In-curtilage garages and parking areas located to the side or rear of properties to avoid car dominance of the streetscape.	Essential

Appendix 2: Placemaking Audit | Eàrr-ràdh 2: Sgrùdadh Dèanamh Àiteachan

Design Quality	Ambition	Requirement
S3	Provision of appropriately designed residents and visitor cycle parking in a sheltered, secured and overlooked position, in conformity with the Council's Roads and Transportation Guidelines ⁽⁴⁾ . In urban flatted developments, individual in-unit cycle storage is encouraged.	Essential
S4	Provision of open public spaces in accordance with relevant Local Development Plan ⁽⁵⁾ (LDP) policy to be fit for purpose, usable, flexible (including utility hook-ups to civic spaces) and cost effective to maintain. Delivered in compliance with PAN 65: Planning and Open Space ⁽⁶⁾ .	Essential
S5	Well located and sufficient play opportunities provided, in areas which benefit from natural surveillance and are integrated into the overall scheme. Play equipment to be inclusive and serves a range of ages (including adults).	Essential
S6	Play areas achieve a minimum "Bronze" Play Inclusive Play Areas (PIPA) accreditation.	Desirable
S7	External lighting sited and designed to avoid light pollution and use energy efficient LED fittings. New Street lighting to be in the form of dimming LED columns/fittings.	Essential
S8	Secured by Design: Homes ⁽⁷⁾ (2019) and/or Commercial Developments ⁽⁸⁾ (2015) respected and awarded to a minimum Bronze standard.	Desirable
S9	Scheme designed to comply with the BRE "Home Quality Mark" scheme.	Desirable
S10	An accessible Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is provided.	Desirable
S11	The development accords with a Local Place Plan.	Desirable
Welcoming		
W1	Developments require to be designed to assist residents and visitors orientate and move around the site without becoming disorientated. This can be achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing or accentuating landmarks to create or improve views; • locating public art to identify places. Public art provided in accordance with relevant LDP policy/Supplementary Guidance; • use of "Sequence Markers"; • careful siting of signature buildings or utilising contrasting massing; 	Essential

Appendix 2: Placemaking Audit | Eàrr-ràdh 2: Sgrùdadh Dèanamh Àiteachan

Design Quality	Ambition	Requirement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing high quality signage and/or distinctive lighting to illuminate attractive/important buildings; proportionate provision of high-quality street furniture and signage. 	
Adaptable		
A1	<p>The layout should include a mixture of uses, building densities, housing types and tenures.</p> <p>Affordable housing provision to be provided in accordance with LDP policies.</p> <p>Within the urban cores flatted developments could include vertical mixed-use blocks.</p>	Essential
A2	Affordable house design conforms to the Council's Firm Foundations Design Brief: Building Homes for the Highlands ⁽⁹⁾ and Scottish Government's Housing for Varying Needs Design Standards ⁽¹⁰⁾ .	Essential
A3	Infrastructure provided for "Fibre to the Premises" (FTP) installation.	Desirable
A4	In housing developments, self-build house plots are provided in accordance with LDP policy.	Essential
A5	Utility infrastructure hardware (e.g. substations, telecommunication cabinets and pumping stations) are appropriately designed, sited and screened from public view.	Essential
A6	Infrastructure (cable routes) provided for in-curtilage Electric Vehicle (EV) charge-point installation.	Essential
Resource Efficient		
R1	The development is of a suitable density to avoid excessive land-use and does not detrimentally affect neighbouring established uses.	Essential
R2	Existing mature landscaping within and adjacent to the site is retained, protected and enhanced to create new wildlife corridors.	Essential
R3	Within residential developments, an area for allotments, community gardens, community woodlands or a community orchard or community food growing space is provided in a location which encourages public harvest.	Essential
R4	Built developments located out-with the relevant SEPA flood extents ⁽¹¹⁾ and shown to avoid flood risk.	Essential

Appendix 2: Placemaking Audit | Eàrr-ràdh 2: Sgrùdadh Dèanamh Àiteachan

Design Quality	Ambition	Requirement
R5	Decorative well integrated SUDS scheme which includes a degree of natural surveillance and designed to conform to the current edition of Sewers for Scotland ⁽¹²⁾ or the CIRIA SUDS Manual ⁽¹³⁾ . The long term inspection and maintenance regime and organisation responsible identified at the outset.	Essential
R6	Watercourses and wetlands areas retained, improved and incorporated into the scheme. Including adoption of the Council Riparian policy.	Essential
R7	Incorporates the use of water conservation principles; including individual properties rainwater collection and reuse systems.	Desirable
R8	Appropriately designed and sited in-curtilage storage space for refuse and recycling and the provision/locations for on-street collection points identified.	Essential
R9	For residential developments over 100 units, appropriately designed and sited communal glass recycling facilities and community composting areas provided.	Essential
R10	The layout should be designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximise benefits from solar gains and internal daylighting to individual properties; • minimise wind-channelling between units and protect buildings from the prevailing weather; • have properties with 'living roof' and/or 'living wall' systems; • avoid the use of dead-end 'cul-de-sacs' and limited use of private access roads; • ensure rear garden access to mid-terraced properties is achieved; • deliver the higher density units closest to community facilities and public transport nodes. 	Essential
R11	The development makes use of micro-renewable technology and/or enhanced energy efficiency/recovery systems (improvement on the levels sought in the Building Standards).	Desirable
R12	Bio-diversity aspects are mitigated, protected and restored as part of the development, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An initial Wildlife Assessment Check is undertaken and submitted as part of the proposal. 	Essential

Appendix 2: Placemaking Audit | Eàrr-ràdh 2: Sgrùdadh Dèanamh Àiteachan

Design Quality	Ambition	Requirement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the above assessment, formal appropriate wildlife & species assessments are prepared, and outcomes respected and incorporated into the scheme. The inclusion of nesting boxes and habitat creation (bird, bat and insect boxes) are provided across the scheme. Invasive non-native species⁽¹⁴⁾ identified and removed. Wildflower meadows and/or mini-forests established on site. 	
R13	Construction material sourced from environmentally managed supplies and construction waste is minimised and recycled where possible.	Desirable
R14	The development applies the RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guide ⁽¹⁵⁾ (2019) to the design of both buildings and places.	Desirable
Easy to Move Around and Beyond		
E1	Developments to be well connected to bus and rail nodes in accordance with PAN 75: Planning for Transport ⁽¹⁶⁾ . New or extended bus routes to be served by well located, high quality bus shelters which are well lit and provide sheltered seating and real time bus information.	Essential
E2	<p>A clear road and street hierarchy is designed to conform with Designing Streets⁽¹⁷⁾ and the Council's Roads and Transportations Guidelines for New Developments⁽¹⁸⁾ and should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road design speed appropriate to the form and nature of the street design and development layout; Road junction designed to prioritise active travel; Consideration given to future road connections for adjacent/later schemes; Underground utilities located within service strips/road verges; Varying road designs, widths and surfacing to differentiate the hierarchy. 	Essential
E3	The layout includes "Homezones", "Town Squares" and/or "Play Streets" to encourage greater mode share of the street network.	Desirable
E4	The location and distances to existing facilities (e.g. education, retail and community uses) are assessed against PAN 75: Planning for Transport ⁽¹⁹⁾ and the requirement for expanded or new facilities should be addressed.	Essential

Appendix 2: Placemaking Audit | Eàrr-ràdh 2: Sgrùdadh Dèanamh Àiteachan

Design Quality	Ambition	Requirement
E5	A network of fully accessible compliant interconnected, permeable, well-lit, intuitive and overlooked active travel routes which follow desire lines and are suitably graded are created. These should link to or extend existing active travel networks, National Cycle Networks, Safer Route to School networks and/or Core Paths where they exist and allow for future extensions into adjacent lands.	Essential
E6	Communal parking, parking barns and visitor parking areas designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conform to the Council's Roads and Transportations Guidelines for New Developments ⁽²⁰⁾; ensure they are overlooked and well lit; avoid dominance of the streetscape; ensure parking bays are broken up into groups of no more than five bays and interspersed with soft landscaping/street trees; provide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging locations; provide "Car Club" spaces; comply with the Safer Parking "Park Mark" Scheme. 	Essential

- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/creating-places-policy-statement-architecture-place-scotland/>
- https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/579/major_developments/4
- https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19365/shopfront_design_guide
- https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/527/road_guidelines_for_new_developments
- https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_statutory_development_plans
- <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2008/06/planning-advice-note-pan-65-planning-open-space/documents/0060935-pdf/0060935-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0060935.pdf>
- https://www.securedbydesign.com/images/downloads/HOMES_BROCHURE_2019_NEW_version_2.pdf
- https://www.securedbydesign.com/images/downloads/SBD_Commercial_2015_V2.pdf
- https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19461/firm_foundations_design_brief_-_building_homes_for_the_highlands
- <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20170104122951/www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/investment/guidancenotes/olderguidance/cs9n200412>
- <http://map.sepa.org.uk/floodmap/map.htm>
- <https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=www.scottishwater.co.uk/-/media/ScottishWater/Document-Hub/Business-and-Developers/Connecting-to-our-network/All-connections-information/SewersForScotlandv4.pdf>
- <https://www.ciria.org/ItemDetail?iProductCode=C753&Category=BOOK&WebsiteKey=3f18c87a-d62b-4eca-8ef4-9b09309c1c91>
- <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/safeguarding-protected-areas-and-species/protected-species/scottish-invasive-species-initiative>

15. <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/GatherContent/Test-resources-page/Additional-Documents/RIBASustainableOutcomesGuide2019pdf.pdf>
16. <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2005/08/planning-advice-note-pan-75-planning-transport/documents/0016795-pdf/0016795-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0016795.pdf>
17. <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2010/03/designing-streets-policy-statement-scotland/documents/0096540-pdf/0096540-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0096540.pdf>
18. https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/527/road_guidelines_for_new_developments
19. <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2005/08/planning-advice-note-pan-75-planning-transport/documents/0016795-pdf/0016795-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0016795.pdf>
20. https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/99/roads_information/2

The Highland Council Placemaking Audit Glossary

Active Frontage: A street where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground and upper floors of buildings.

Active Travel: Journeys undertaken by physically active means, like walking, wheeling or cycling.

Allotment: A small piece of ground, in or just outside an urban area that a person rents for growing vegetables, fruits, or flowers.

BRE Home Quality Mark: An assessment tool to demonstrate high quality homes and to differentiate them in the marketplace. At the same time, it gives householders the confidence that the new home are well designed and built, and cost effective to run.

Community Garden: A single piece of land, gardened collectively by a group of people.

Community Woodland: Woodland where the local community has control over how the woodland is run or managed.

Corner Turner: A building located on a corner (e.g. at a road junction), designed to provide an active frontage to both streets.

Core Path: Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016, Councils have a duty to prepare a Core Paths Plan. The purpose is to identify a network of key routes for outdoor access; an Interactive Map of Highland Council Core Paths is available.

Cul-de-sac: A street with only one inlet/outlet, connected to the wider street network.

Design Speed: The design speed is a logical speed to travel a road with respect to the topography, anticipated operating speed, the adjacent land use, and the functional classification of the highway.

Appendix 2: Placemaking Audit | Eàrr-ràdh 2: Sgrùdadh Dèanamh Àiteachan

Desire Lines: A route which represents the shortest or most easily navigated route between an origin and destination.

Fully Accessible: All routes designed to conform to the Equality Act to ensure routes are fit for purpose and open to all users.

Green Network: Local Development Plan designation of green areas within an urban area, which could be put to a multitude of uses (including play areas).

Greenspace: Formally recognised in the Local Development Plans. Contains no built development and is safeguarded. It will contribute to the character and setting of a place and provide amenity, biodiversity, recreation and other benefits.

Home Zone: Residential areas designed to ensure that the quality of life in the residential area takes precedence over ease of vehicle movement. They usually involve narrow shared surfaces roads with built-in elements (raised tables/chicanes) combined with features such as trees, planters and street furniture to limit traffic speeds.

Living Roof: A roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and a growing medium.

Living Wall: Panels of plants, grown vertically using hydroponics, on structures that can be either free-standing or attached to walls.

National Cycle Networks: A UK-wide network of signed walking and cycling paths connecting cities, towns, and the countryside.

Micro-Renewables: Small scale systems that generate electricity and/or heat.

Mini-forests: Tiny, dense forests achieved by planting saplings close together, three per square metre, using native varieties adapted to local conditions. A wide variety of species, ideally 30 or more planted to recreate the layers of a natural forest.

Parking Barn: Communal open frontage covered parking area.

Perimeter Blocks: The public facing parts of buildings are orientated to face the street and the more private (garden) elements are located within the block.

Play Streets: Simple, effective and low-cost way for children to be able to play out in the streets where they live.

PIPA: PiPA (Play Inclusive Play Areas) provides a comprehensive six point assessment tool to help inform/improve new play space design to ensure all children benefit from the play provision. Bronze, Silver and Gold accreditations available.

Safer Parking "Park Mark": A national standard for UK car parks that have low crime and measures in place to ensure the safety of people and vehicles.

Safer Routes to School: Routes designed to decrease traffic and pollution and increase the health of children and the community, by promoting walking and biking to school.

Secured by Design: A Police initiative that improves the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit.

Self-build house plot: A house plot available for an individual or group of individuals to build house(s) to plans and specifications decided by them.

Sense of arrival: A special feeling a person experiences during the first ten seconds or so after entering a location.

Sense of place: The context as well as the identity or unique characteristics of a building or space that creates meaning for the occupant or user.

Sequence Markers: A physical/built item that helps a user to orientate themselves. Can be either a natural landmark or view or a man-made feature, including; differing house styles, street furniture, decorative feature or path design/finish.

Street Trees: A tree located on land forming or adjacent to a road which affects, in some way, those using that highway.

SUDS: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems are water management practices that aim to align modern drainage systems with the natural water cycle.

Town Squares: An open public space located in the heart of an urban area used for community gatherings and events.

Wildlife Assessment Check: Free online tool available from "Biodiversity in Planning" for small to medium-scale developers to check whether they will need expert ecological advice before submitting a planning application. The tool is not intended for large development projects where formal Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) are required according to EIA regulations.

Wildlife Corridor: Interlinked greenspaces to provide connections across sites for biodiversity.

Appendix 2: Placemaking Audit | Eàrr-ràdh 2: Sgrùdadh Dèanamh Àiteachan

Wind Channelling: A negative effect resulting from a ridged layout which channels wind between buildings.

