

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment

Plana Leasachaidh Ionadail Linne Mhoireibh A-Staigh Measadh Àrainneachd Ro-innleachdail

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Draft Environmental Report

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1 A More Proportionate and Holistic Approach

The Purpose of Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced a statutory requirement for plans such as the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan - because it is likely to have significant environmental effects - to be shaped by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The wider purpose of SEA is to make sure that consideration of environmental effects is embedded in the public policy decision making process. This consideration should be early in the process and have an effective and evidenced outcome on the process. There is an additional aim of engaging the public in SEA.

A More Proportionate Approach

The Scottish Government, as part of its reform of the Scottish planning system, has undertaken a review of SEA following concerns expressed about its proportionality. Some SEA practitioners find the amount of information to be collected and analysed as part of the SEA process to be disproportionate to any beneficial impact of that analysis on the final public policy. Highland Council's experience is that the aim of engaging the general public in SEA is inhibited by the overly technical, complex and untargeted nature of the current process. Therefore, in the spirit of proportionality, this draft Environmental Report takes a different approach and is more targeted in terms of: the range of data collected and analysed; the policy and development site options assessed; and, hyperlinking rather than including reference information within the Report.

A More Holistic Approach

SEA, as introduced in Scotland, only considers environmental effects in making public policy decisions. Whilst this separation from other decision making factors purifies and maintains the integrity of the environmental effects assessment process it has led some decision makers to regard SEA as divorced from, not an integral part of, the decisions that they make. Other nations of the UK integrate consideration of environmental effects with socio-economic and other factors in making public policy decisions. This draft Environmental Report particularly in its assessment of the detail of individual development sites includes consideration of socio-economic and other factors in explaining our initial site preferences. We feel that the public and others will better understand our choices if they can see how we've assessed all considerations not just those related to the environment. However, to respect the relevant legislation and the purity of the SEA process, this document concentrates on environmental effects. The Appendix to this Report lists the 48 questions used to assess all potential development allocations and differentiates in red text those which are socio-economic. In summary these are questions 34 (transport network capacity), 38 (school capacity), 40 (water and sewerage capacity) and 45-47 (viability).

2 An Easy Read Summary

The purpose of this document – the Highland Council must produce an Environmental Report to explain how we will make sure that the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan helps protect and ideally enhances the environment, for example, doesn't support new building in areas that will cause flooding or damage local heritage such as important woodland. This section is intended as a *Non Technical Summary* as required under the relevant legislation.

Can I comment? – yes. This is a **draft** assessment of how the Plan **may** affect the local environment. With any strategic assessment, there are many variables and assumptions that have to be made to reach conclusions so we want your views on all these parts of the Report. We hope this document is transparent in explaining how we've made our choices on the Plan's content but we would welcome your comments on how we've assessed environmental and other effects. If you are only interested in the protection of the environment close to where you live then section 7 details the assessment of site-specific effects of potential development proposals.

Likely environmental effects of the Plan – this Report sets out the existing condition of the environment (known as the "baseline") and the good and bad effects that we think the Plan may have on the environment i.e. the likely changes to this baseline. These are set out in sections 6, 7 and 8. In summary we believe we have assessed all relevant effects and where necessary suggested suitable mitigation. Section 7 provides a *Non Technical Summary* at settlement level and is not replicated here for the sake of brevity.

Reducing bad effects and increasing good effects – one purpose of this Report is to define what needs to be done to make the Plan better in terms of its potential effect on the environment. These improvements are called mitigation and include measures such as new tree planting, more public open space and better habitat for wildlife. This mitigation will be detailed in the next version of the Plan, most commonly as a list of developer requirements for each development site. This list tells a developer what they have to do to protect the environment and therefore to increase their chances of obtaining a planning permission on any site. Suggested mitigation is set out in sections 6 and 7.

How the Plan's content has been influenced by this Report - we believe that we've made reasonable choices in deciding what scale, type and location of new building is supported in the Plan taking account of likely environmental effects and other effects detailed in this Report. Examples of how this assessment has shaped the Plan are set out in sections 6 and 7.

What's Next? – this is a draft of the Environmental Report because we haven't made a final decision on what the Plan will say about development across the Inner Moray Firth and therefore what effects that development may have. Also, we may have missed, underestimated or overestimated effects so we want your input to check our assessment. We will look at all comments on this draft Report and the Main Issues Report (the first stage of making the Plan) before finalising what we think.

3 How to Comment

This Report is available for people to view on the Highland Council's website – type in the address 'highland.gov.uk/imf' and click on the Background Documents link from that webpage. Subject to the removal of current Covid-19 public office opening restrictions, a full paper copy may be able to be inspected at the Council's Headquarters Office, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness. We also, on telephone request, can send paper extracts of the Report to those who don't have access online. In line with statutory requirements, the Environmental Report will be submitted through the SEA Gateway for comment by the Consultation Authorities (Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency). A press notice is being published to advertise the opportunity for comment.

We would be happy to receive any public comments on this Report. They should be lodged by emailing us at imfldp@highland.gov.uk before 5pm on Thursday 1 April 2021. If you don't have access online then please contact us by telephone on (01349) 886608 and ask to speak to a member of the Development Plans Team and we will discuss other options for submitting your views.

This draft Environmental Report is published in parallel with the Plan's Main Issues Report. **The consultation period runs from 29 January 2021 to 1 April 2021** for both the Environmental Report and the Main Issues Report.

At the next Plan stage, this draft Environmental Report will be revised and published alongside the Proposed Plan. There will be a further public consultation period at that stage.

4 The Environmental Baseline and SEA Objectives

What is a Baseline?

Before we can assess what impact the Plan may have on the environment we need to know what condition the local environment is in now. This is known as the Environmental Baseline against which potential, future positive and negative effects can be tested. There is a lot of published and freely available information on the current state of the environment in each part of Scotland and to date most councils including Highland have chosen to replicate this information in their respective environmental reports.

We believe that repeating information available elsewhere adds little value to the SEA process and outcome so this section of this Report lists weblinks to all of the information we have used to define the baseline and to assess likely effects but doesn't contain the information itself.

We believe that we have used the best publicly available and reliable information in producing this Report but we are always open to considering the use of new/different data or a better methodology in interpreting existing data.

The baseline is always changing because of natural processes and global issues like climate change so we have also compared what might happen to the Plan area's environment if we do nothing. Given that land use plan preparation is a statutory responsibility not producing the Plan is not a realistic option so we have equated the "do-nothing" option to continuing with the policies we have in the adopted Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2015.

Data Sources

We have used the Scottish Government's online environment tool "Scotland's Environment" <https://www.environment.gov.scot/> and for the site assessment process we have used a variety of mapped data the public sources of which are listed below. Comments from the Consultation Authorities and other consultees and internal Highland Council data have also been used in the assessment process.

Water Environment

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/data-visualisation/water-environment-hub/>

Flood Risk – SEPA and Internal THC data

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/flood-maps/>

Coastal Erosion

<https://snh.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=3b70a725513446749e62612e3dd4b463>

Natural Heritage Areas

<https://sitelink.nature.scot/home>

Woodland and Other Natural Heritage

<https://map.environment.gov.scot/sewebmap/>

Vacant and Derelict Land

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=71a83deabc2e4d84ba2bdd0e870e0c8e>

Soils

https://map.environment.gov.scot/Soil_maps/?layer=1

Prime Farmland

https://map.environment.gov.scot/Soil_maps/?layer=1

Landscape

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-scenic-areas-of-scotland-maps/>

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/2937/assessment_of_highland_special_landscape_areas

Wild Land

<https://www.nature.scot/wild-land-2014-maps>

Historic Environment

<https://her.highland.gov.uk/>

Outdoor Access

<https://highland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2fd3fc9c72d545f7bcf1b43bf5c8445f>

<https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/>

School Capacities

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/818/school_roll_forecasts

Developer Contributions

https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/712087/developer_contributions

Delivery Programme

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

The Sensitivity of the Plan Area's Environment to Development

Relative to the rest of Highland, the Inner Moray Firth has fewer environmental designations and other constraints and many of these relate to the coastal and mountainous margins of the Plan area. Therefore, most potential conflicts between development and environmental needs can be managed and mitigated. More challenging is that the majority of future growth in Highland will take place within the Plan area. The solution is to harness and direct that growth to environmentally sustainable locations. The optimum locations are within the existing, larger settlements like Inverness but even here built heritage, contamination, flood risk and pollution issues may arise.

Indeed, many of these major settlements are in coastal or estuarine locations because historically these were close to fishing opportunities, river fording points, better drained and agriculturally productive land, and transport was easier by water than by land. Thankfully, these locational factors have changed and now environmental effects sensitivity can play a greater role in growth location selection. For example, climate change with its associated rise in average sea levels and the frequency and intensity of flood events, suggests that new development, even if within or close to the major settlements, should only be supported close to the coast if it has a functional imperative to be there – e.g. an expansion of an existing harbour.

Similarly, coastal recreational and tourism activities can adversely affect off-shore marine interests and the Plan will need to ensure its support for an increase in sustainable tourism considers these effects and suitable mitigation.

SEA Objectives

We have assessed the Plan's policy and development site options against the environmental baseline and a set of SEA Objectives. These Objectives have been defined and refined over successive development plans in Highland, have had input from the Consultation Authorities and address all the main SEA topics which are defined in legislation (Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005). The Plan's SEA Objectives are as follows.

1. To conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity and accord to the protection of valued nature conservation habitats and species.
2. To improve the living environment for all communities and promote improved health of the human population.
3. Safeguard the soil quality, geo-diversity and improve contaminated land.
4. Avoid and then if necessary reduce flood risk, and protect and where possible enhance and restore the water environment.
5. To protect and improve air quality (particularly within the Inverness Air Quality Action Plan area), reduce levels of air pollution and reduce levels of nuisance
6. Reduce greenhouse gases and contribute to the adaptation of the area to climate change.
7. Manage, maintain and promote sustainable use of material assets.
8. Protect and enhance, where appropriate, the area's rich historic environment and its setting.
9. Protect and enhance the character, diversity and unique qualities of the landscape.

5. What is the Plan and how does it relate to other Environmental Policies, Plans and Legislation?

What is the Plan?

The Plan's title is the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2. It is the second local development plan to be prepared for the Inner Moray Firth area and will repeal and replace the existing Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan which was adopted by the Highland Council in July 2015. Its preparation is required by statute under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Its subject is land use planning and it will start to be applied in relevant decisions when it reaches its Proposed Plan stage, which is currently scheduled for early 2022. It is intended to be an extant statutory document until it is replaced by an adopted successor development plan which is unlikely to be until 2027 at the earliest. The Plan contains a longer term vision, and policies and proposals, that are likely to be maintained over a timeframe as far ahead as 2050.

The geographic area covered by the Plan is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1

The purpose of the Plan is to provide an up to date land use framework principally for the main settlements across this Plan area. The Plan will promote the growth of the area by identifying suitable land uses in settlements. It will sit alongside another Highland Council document called the Highland-wide Local Development Plan which sets the context for strategic growth and provides general policies.

The Plan will include:

- an introductory context
- a Vision
- a set of desired Outcomes
- a Spatial Strategy
- a limited number of general policies applicable across the Plan area
- development site allocations and boundaries
- site-specific developer requirements
- areas of valued local greenspace which is to be protected from development

The Plan and the Report will follow a similar, parallel timescale and process as detailed in Figure 2.

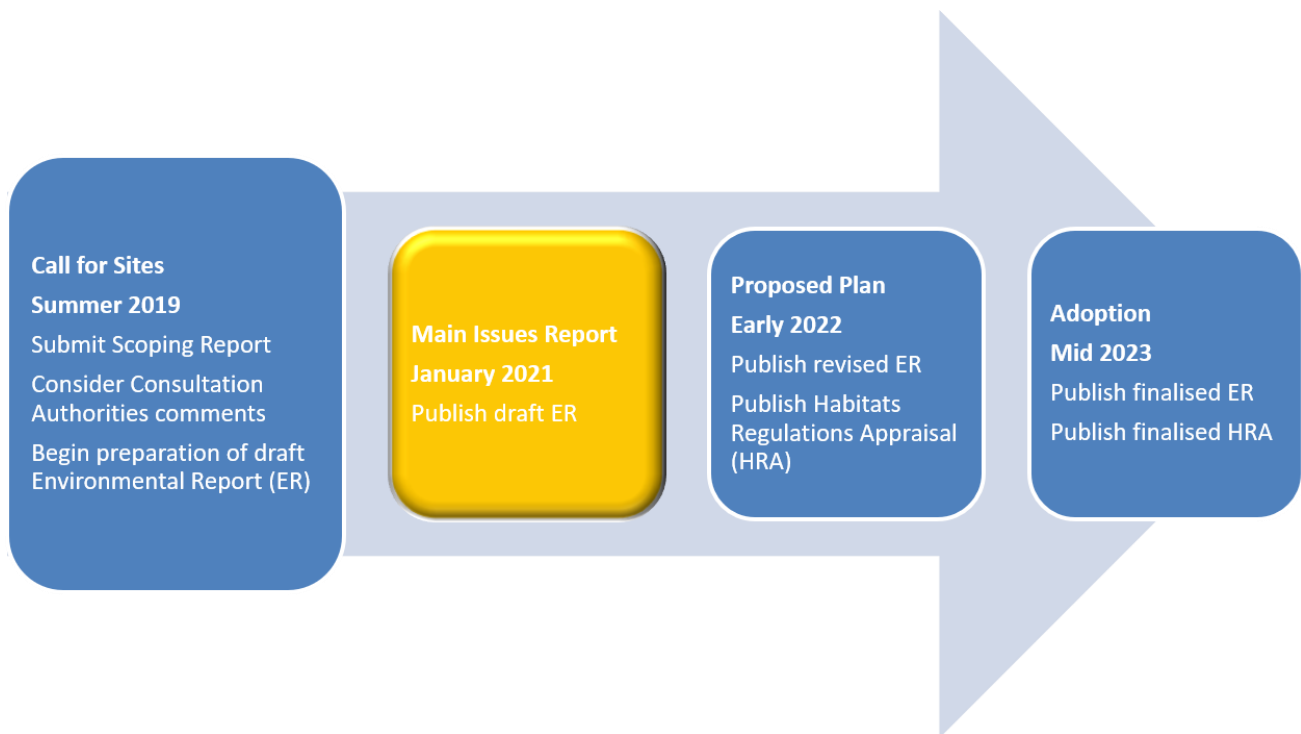


Figure 2

How does the Plan relate to other Policies, Plans and Environmental Law?

There is a myriad of planning and environmental policies, programmes and plans that could affect any single development proposal within the Inner Moray Firth area. The Plan is another consideration material to the outcome of development proposals. Each plan, policy and programme has regard to, or takes account of, the suite of other guidance.

The Plan will be a statutory document and form part of the “approved development plan” for the Inner Moray Firth. This status requires decision makers first to check whether any development proposal is in

overall conformity with the “approved development plan” before considering other material considerations. This offers the Plan a degree of primacy as a factor in determining planning applications and other proposals.

However, other, environmental policy and legislation may also be applicable to the consideration of any proposal and is relevant in shaping the content of the Plan. A list of national environmental policy can be accessed via the first link below and a list of national environmental legislation via the second link. The Scottish Government has announced that, post Brexit, its intention is to match the environmental protection offered by current European legislation. Current intentions are available via the third link below but we will update this Report in line with changes in national legislation.

<https://www.gov.scot/environment-and-climate-change/>

<https://www.netregs.org.uk/legislation/scotland-environmental-legislation/>

<https://www.mygov.scot/brexit-environment/>

Other environmental regulators also have their own policies and guidance and these can be accessed via the links below.

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/how-we-regulate/policies/>

<https://www.nature.scot/about-snh/our-work/our-policy-and-guidance>

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/historic-environment-policy-for-scotland-heps/>

Habitats Regulations Appraisal

The Council will also carry out a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) to accompany the Proposed Plan. Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive requires that any plan which is not directly connected with the management of a European site, but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site shall be subject to an ‘appropriate assessment’ of its implications in view of the site’s conservation objectives.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) have produced guidance on Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans (2015) which outlines a thirteen stage appraisal process. This guidance will be followed to prepare the Plan’s HRA. All the policies and potential development sites will be subject to HRA, in regard to any likely significant effect on a European designated site (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and/or Ramsar Sites). This Report’s SEA Site Assessment Matrix includes assessment of this matter and has acted as an early screening of sites that are likely to require HRA.

6 Assessment of Policy Options

Our Policy Options

The associated Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan: Main Issues Report contains a Vision and overarching Outcomes. These are based on the already determined [national](#), [regional](#) and [sub-regional](#) outcomes, which have been through successive SEA processes and therefore their assessment is not included in this Report . Instead, we have chosen to assess alternative policy approaches to the Main Issues that flow from the outcomes because although general they are more specific to the Plan area and its environment.

The initial version of the Plan contains a choice of ways to address the Main Issues we have identified. We have set out our initial, preferred approach for each Main Issue but also other options that we don't favour and given our reasons for all our preferences. Because the Main Issues Report is a consultation document some of our preferences are suggested approaches to the Main Issues rather than definitive policies and therefore, at present, our assessment of them against the SEA Objectives and Environmental Baseline is similarly inexplicit. At the next Proposed Plan stage, the Revised Environmental Report will contain a more focussed assessment of more definitive policies. For each Main Issue we have included a "do-nothing" option, which we have equated to continuing with the policies we have in the adopted Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2015.

The scoring in the tables below is our assessment of the overall post mitigation effect on each SEA topic or objective of our preferred policy/approach for each of the main issues.

"--" which means significant negative effects;

"-" which means minor negative effects;

"=" which means an overall neutral effect;

"+" which means minor positive effects; or

"++" which means significant positive effects.

MAIN ISSUE 1: Address the Climate and Ecological Emergency	
SEA Objective	<p><i>Our Preferred approach:</i> <i>our preferred approach is to promote the efficient use of heat, have a more environmentally sustainable settlement hierarchy, encourage more environmentally sustainable travel patterns and modes, and to maximise the climate change offsetting potential of our green and water spaces.</i></p> <p><i>Alternative approaches considered:</i> <i>we have considered the continuation of existing Highland planning policies that affect this issue.</i></p>
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: better protected and enhanced green and water spaces should have positive effects on biodiversity.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>

2 Population and Human Health	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: more sustainable travel patterns and modes should have positive effects on human health as should better public access to green and water spaces.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
3 Soil	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: a more environmentally sustainable settlement hierarchy and better protection of green spaces could reduce greenfield development and therefore soil disturbance.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: even the preferred approach will still allow development of greenfield sites and in Highland, physical constraints such as gradient and ground conditions are so pronounced, and the lack of viable brownfield sites mean, that most future development will still lead to higher quality soil disturbance.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
4 Water	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: a more environmentally sustainable settlement hierarchy and better protection of green and water spaces should concentrate more future development within public sewer network areas, set development back from flood risk areas and enhance the biodiversity and amenity value of waterbodies.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
5 Air	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: directing more growth to the largest (albeit best connected) settlements and a general increase in housing densities may increase localised pollution but low/zero carbon district heating schemes, protected and expanded green corridors, and a switch to non-polluting travel modes may offset this.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: monitoring that consolidation of the largest settlements such as Inverness doesn't lead to a net loss of local green space and does result in less polluting travel.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
6 Climatic Factors	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: our preferred approach is a package of planning policy measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change so should result in positive effects across all measures. For example, our suggested new, linked approaches to the settlement hierarchy and transport should reduce the need for car borne travel and therefore reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
7 Material Assets	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: one aspect of our settlement hierarchy is to make best use of existing infrastructure capacity or to add growth where extra capacity can be added at least cost. Our approach of consolidation of the largest settlements will make</p>

	<p>district heating, public sewerage and waste recycling cheaper per unit of development and therefore more likely to be implemented.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
8 Cultural Heritage	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: consolidating future growth within the largest settlements with the best sustainable travel connections and most infrastructure capacity is more likely to have adverse effects on urban built heritage and less on rural built heritage. Digging trenches for district heating networks could have adverse townscape effects but such networks are more likely in new development areas and such trenches could offer opportunities for discovery, recording and interpretation of archaeology.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: site-specific developer requirements for archaeological or other built heritage impact assessment and mitigation if and where Plan allocations and any associated district heating scheme is in a sensitive location.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
9 Landscape	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: consolidating future growth within the largest settlements with the best sustainable travel connections and most infrastructure capacity is likely to better safeguard rural landscapes and, with the application of good Placemaking principles, urban landscapes.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>

	<p>MAIN ISSUE 2: Support a strong, diverse and sustainable economy (post pandemic Economic Recovery)</p>
	<p><i>Our Preferred approach: our preferred approach is to: allocate more employment land than previously; allow more flexibility in where enterprises can locate; better encourage developers to make employment land and buildings available within mixed use sites; streamline the planning process for larger, allocated employment sites; and, promote sustainable tourism particularly in the Loch Ness area.</i></p>
SEA Objective	<p>Alternative approaches considered: we have considered the continuation of existing Highland planning policies that affect this issue.</p>
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: more employment development, dependent upon its location, could have adverse effects on biodiversity.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is more likely to safeguard the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: the suggested additional allocated employment sites should avoid significant residual adverse environmental effects. Where necessary developer requirements to safeguard and if possible enhance biodiversity will be added to these allocations. Windfall employment applications will be assessed against existing environmental legislation and policy safeguards. Sustainable tourism will be largely about better managing the transport and therefore environmental effects of visitors so may have some beneficial effects.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>

2 Population and Human Health	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: we will still support the separation of industrial and residential uses but support for live/work units and mixed use developments may lead to a minor increase in localised noise pollution with neighbours more affected than in the traditional residential only suburb. Conversely a more dispersed range of job opportunities may decrease the length of commuter journeys and the harmful emissions presently associated with such trips.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies will have similarly neutral impact relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: all employment proposals will still be subject to emissions controls regardless of where they are proposed but the imposition of Green Travel Plans for larger new employers could achieve net betterment relative to existing car dominated commuting.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
3 Soil	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: a more permissive approach to the location of new enterprises could result in more impact on soils but the additional, allocated employment sites have been assessed against this objective and some are on previously developed or already allocated land.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies will have similarly neutral impact relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: careful siting and layout can minimise soil disturbance.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
4 Water	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: a more permissive approach to the location of new enterprises could result in more impact on flooding and the wider water environment but the additional, allocated employment sites have been assessed against this objective.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies will have similarly neutral impact relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: careful siting and layout can avoid and if necessary mitigate any adverse impacts on flood risk and the wider water environment.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
5 Air	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: a more dispersed pattern of jobs should disperse the air pollution effects of that activity and other things being equal reduce emissions in travel time to and from that employment. More mixing of employment and housing uses could increase nuisance to immediate neighbours but any effects should be localised.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: positive effects will depend upon more homeworking and matching other people's home and work locations so they are as close to each other as possible. The sustainable tourism approach is about a switch of visitor journeys to lower emission travel modes so again there should be a net positive outcome relative to current practice.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
6 Climatic Factors	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: a more dispersed pattern of jobs should other things being equal reduce emissions in travel time to and from work. Sustainable tourism with a switch of visitor journeys to lower emission travel modes should achieve a net positive outcome relative to current practice.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon visitors and enterprises being willing to embrace new ways of travelling and working.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>

7 Material Assets	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: A more flexible approach to where new enterprises can locate could have both positive and negative effects depending upon whether each enterprise reuses or minimises its own waste and heat resources and can tap into local spare capacity infrastructure networks.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: the Council will apply general policies to all development proposals to ensure the most efficient use of all resources and network capacity.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
8 Cultural Heritage	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: A more flexible approach to where new enterprises can locate could have both positive and negative effects on the historic environment depending upon the site-specifics.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: any rural or home working enterprises should be limited in scale and/or have a localised impact. A switch to more sustainable travel modes for visitors should have benefit for the more pressured built heritage assets such as Urquhart Castle.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
9 Landscape	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: A more flexible approach to where new enterprises can locate could have both positive and negative effects on the landscape depending upon the site-specifics.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: Better management of visitor pressures by supporting a switch to more sustainable travel modes should have beneficial landscape effects. Any rural or home working enterprises should be limited in scale and/or have a localised impact.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>

SEA Objective	<p style="text-align: center;">MAIN ISSUE 3: Grow the most sustainable places</p> <p><i>Our Preferred approach:</i> <i>our preferred approach is to direct a higher proportion of the lower level of forecast future housing and commercial growth to more environmentally sustainable and economically viable locations.</i></p>
	<p><i>Alternative approaches considered:</i> <i>we could continue with existing planning policies or even allow the development industry and even freer choice of location for housing and commercial proposals.</i></p>
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: concentrating a higher proportion of a lower level of future growth within settlements should, other things being equal, have fewer adverse impacts on biodiversity relative to the alternatives.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies may have an adverse effect on the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
2 Population and Human Health	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: concentrating a higher proportion of a lower level of future growth within settlements is likely to have both positive and negative effects on human health. Such a pattern of development will encourage healthier active travel</p>

	<p>journeys but higher densities and settlement compaction may erode private green spaces and affect the mental health of some residents.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: settlement compaction and higher density housing developments should not be at the expense of accessible and useable greenspace and we will use our Placemaking Policy to ensure better development layouts.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
3 Soil	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: concentrating a higher proportion of a lower level of future growth within settlements is likely to have positive effects on soil relative to a continuation of existing planning policies if not relative to the baseline. There will be better encouragement of development on brownfield rather than agriculturally productive land.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies may have an adverse effect on the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
4 Water	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: concentrating a higher proportion of a lower level of future growth within settlements is likely to have both positive and negative effects on flood risk and the water environment. For example, concentrating further development within settlements with old combined sewer networks may lead to spills that harm water quality. Similarly, higher densities and plot ratios may reduce the scope for within curtilage infiltration of potential flood waters. More positively, public sewer networks are more readily available within settlements and therefore more development will connect to a properly managed network.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: within settlement setbacks from flood risk water bodies will be vital and developer requirements / Scottish Water capital programme commitments to resolve existing limitations in public sewerage networks.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
5 Air	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach concentrating a higher proportion of a lower level of future growth within settlements may have negative effects on air quality and public nuisance. Settlement compaction and higher densities will mean that people will be closer to each other and therefore the potential for nuisance in terms of noise pollution will be higher. Conversely, there will be more opportunities for active travel rather than harmful emissions producing car journeys.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: sound proofing of properties and measures to support modal shift to zero or lower emissions producing journeys.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
6 Climatic Factors	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: concentrating a higher proportion of a lower level of future growth within settlements means there will be more opportunities for active travel and public transport rather than carbon emissions producing car journeys.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: measures to support modal shift to zero or lower carbon emissions producing journeys and successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p>

	Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +
7 Material Assets	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: concentrating a higher proportion of a lower level of future growth within settlements that have the most spare capacity in existing or potential new infrastructure networks will make best use of existing and potential future assets. Higher densities and settlement compaction makes heat, energy and other networks more feasible.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
8 Cultural Heritage	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: concentrating a higher proportion of a lower level of future growth within settlements is likely to have both positive and negative effects on the historic environment. Urban built heritage such as conservation areas may be affected but there will be a reduced pressure on rural built heritage features.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: confirmed settlement infill allocations that may compromise built heritage features will have suitable site-specific developer requirements added so that a high standard of architectural design is achieved to offset any adverse impacts on that heritage.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
9 Landscape	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: concentrating a higher proportion of a lower level of future growth within settlements is likely to have mainly positive effects on the landscape.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: allocations on the fringe of a settlement and/or prominent in a public view will still require developer requirement mitigation text to offset any potential adverse effects.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>

	MAIN ISSUE 4: Deliver Affordable Housing
	<i>Our Preferred approach: our preferred approach is to deliver more affordable homes by increasing the % requirement of affordable units within private housing sites where housing need is greatest and to ensure that the affordable component of larger sites is made available in the earlier phases.</i>
SEA Objective	<i>Alternative approaches considered: we have considered the continuation of existing Highland planning policies that affect this issue.</i>
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about changing the type, tenure and timing of future housing development not its location and therefore it will have a neutral effect relative to the existing and other alternative approaches.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
2 Population and Human Health	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about changing the type, tenure and timing of future housing development not its location and therefore it will have a neutral effect relative to the existing and other alternative approaches.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p>

	<p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
3 Soil	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about changing the type, tenure and timing of future housing development not its location and therefore it will have a neutral effect relative to the existing and other alternative approaches.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
4 Water	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about changing the type, tenure and timing of future housing development not its location and therefore it will have a neutral effect relative to the existing and other alternative approaches.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
5 Air	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about changing the type, tenure and timing of future housing development not its location and therefore it will have a neutral effect relative to the existing and other alternative approaches.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
6 Climatic Factors	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about changing the type, tenure and timing of future housing development not its location and therefore it will have a neutral effect relative to the existing and other alternative approaches.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
7 Material Assets	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: a greater proportion of affordable housing within the earlier phases of larger housing sites could lever funding for infrastructure network improvements such as district heating schemes.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: we could add district heating and other infrastructure network improvements requirements to the most strategic, affordable housing led development sites.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
8 Cultural Heritage	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about changing the type, tenure and timing of future housing development not its location and therefore it will have a neutral effect relative to the existing and other alternative approaches.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p>

	Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =
9 Landscape	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about changing the type, tenure and timing of future housing development not its location and therefore it will have a neutral effect relative to the existing and other alternative approaches.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>

MAIN ISSUE 5: Match development with infrastructure capacity	
	<p><i>Our Preferred approach:</i> <i>our preferred approach is to better match the pattern of future growth with the infrastructure capacity necessary to support that growth. This means directing new development to where there is currently spare capacity in all networks or where additional capacity can be added in the most cost effective way – i.e. it is viable for the public sector and the developer.</i></p>
SEA Objective	<p><i>Alternative approaches considered:</i> <i>we have considered the continuation of existing Highland planning policies that affect this issue.</i></p>
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about making sure that new development is connected to all appropriate infrastructure networks at a viable cost and that there is sufficient capacity in each network. If there are any effects these are likely to be positive, e.g. the quality of water habitats should be safeguarded or enhanced if new or perhaps existing development is connected to mains sewerage.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: any positive effects could be maximised by requiring developers and infrastructure providers to connect in both new and existing properties to new and extended networks</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
2 Population and Human Health	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on human health. Arguably, a household in a well serviced and connected development enjoys better access to a clean and reliable water supply than a rural plot accessing a private water supply.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
3 Soil	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on soil.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
4 Water	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about making sure that new development is connected to all appropriate infrastructure networks at a viable cost and that there is sufficient capacity in each network. This includes water, sewerage and</p>

	<p>surface water drainage networks which should, other things being equal, safeguard the water environment and can help accommodate flood waters.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: a public sewerage connection requirement for all main settlements and allocations. A joint lobbying of Scottish Water to ensure that development in Highland can access adequate water and sewerage networks, e.g. renewal of old combined sewer networks.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
5 Air	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on air quality.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
6 Climatic Factors	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on climate change.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
7 Material Assets	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is about making sure that new development is connected to all appropriate infrastructure networks at a viable cost and that there is sufficient capacity in each network. This includes heat, energy and waste management networks so the effects should be positive.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon the viability and acceptability of network improvements to the developer and providers of those networks.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
8 Cultural Heritage	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct and permanent effects on built and cultural heritage. However, network improvements such as fibre optic cabling installation and new sewer laying can have temporary effects on townscape.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: where appropriate we could impose a high standard of architectural design developer requirement for any above ground structures.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
9 Landscape	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on the landscape as most networks are underground although surface water drainage infrastructure if well designed can enhance local visual amenity.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: where appropriate we could impose a high standard of architectural design developer requirement for any above ground structures.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>

MAIN ISSUE 6: Create a more healthy, sustainable transport network	
SEA Objective	<p><i>Our Preferred approach:</i> <i>our preferred approach is to alter the type and pattern of future development and transport facilities to reverse the existing travel hierarchy so that most short journeys are made on foot or cycle, most longer journeys by public transport and the fewest by private car and most of those are by electric or other zero carbon fuel car.</i></p> <p><i>Alternative approaches considered:</i> <i>we have considered the continuation of existing Highland planning policies that affect this issue.</i></p>
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on biodiversity. There may be indirect effects. Positively, a reduction in noise and pollution from car journeys may allow certain species to recover and thrive. Negatively, greater use of green networks for active travel could create disturbance to wildlife although proximity to nature can often increase human knowledge and appreciation of that heritage.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
2 Population and Human Health	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach will have positive effects on human health because more people will engage in active travel and air pollution will be reduced.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
3 Soil	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on soil because it seeks to influence how we travel. The transport facilities to encourage modal shift like EV charging points and Park n' Ride sites may have site-specific impacts but these will be picked up in site-specific developer requirements.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: site-specific developer requirements where necessary.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
4 Water	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on flood risk and the water environment because it seeks to influence how we travel. The transport facilities to encourage modal shift like EV charging points and Park n' Ride sites may have site-specific impacts but these will be picked up in site-specific developer requirements.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: site-specific developer requirements where necessary.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
5 Air	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is likely to have positive effects on the air topic through a reduction in noise and pollution from car journeys.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>

6 Climatic Factors	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is likely to have positive effects on climate change through a reduction in carbon emissions.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
7 Material Assets	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is likely to have positive effects on material assets in terms of a switch to renewable energy to power travel.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: Redundant fuel networks such as natural gas pipes may have to be repurposed so as not to waste that existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
8 Cultural Heritage	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on cultural heritage because it seeks to influence how we travel. The transport facilities to encourage modal shift like EV charging points and Park n' Ride sites may have site-specific impacts but these will be picked up in site-specific developer requirements.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: site-specific developer requirements where necessary.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
9 Landscape	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on the landscape because it seeks to influence how we travel. However, if the new active travel routes offer attractive views of the local landscape then they will increase both appreciation of that landscape and be more likely to encourage modal shift. The transport facilities to encourage modal shift like EV charging points and Park n' Ride sites may have site-specific impacts but these will be picked up in site-specific developer requirements.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: site-specific developer requirements where necessary.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>

	MAIN ISSUE 7: Identify and safeguard valued, local green space
SEA Objective	<p><i>Our Preferred approach:</i> <i>our preferred approach is to better audit and then better protect local, valued, green spaces whether these are public open spaces and/or green networks. We also suggest a developer contribution payment to offset the loss of greenfield land to fund habitat creation/enhancement.</i></p> <p><i>Alternative approaches considered:</i> <i>we have considered the continuation of existing Highland planning policies that affect this issue.</i></p>
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: this approach is about better evidence and a policy for protecting green spaces and therefore effects relative to baseline will be minimal. The suggested policy of seeking developer contributions towards habitat enhancement would, if implemented, have beneficial effects for biodiversity.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>

2 Population and Human Health	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better identified and protected local green spaces should indirectly support greater active travel and therefore improve human health.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
3 Soil	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: this approach is about better evidence and a policy for protecting green spaces and therefore effects relative to baseline will be minimal. However, there should be positive effects relative to a “do-nothing” continuation of existing policies.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
4 Water	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: this approach is about better evidence and a policy for protecting green spaces some of which will contain waterbodies and therefore effects relative to baseline will be minimal. However, there should be positive effects relative to a “do-nothing” continuation of existing policies.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
5 Air	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better audited and protected local green spaces should indirectly support modal shift to zero additional emissions active travel and therefore improve air quality.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
6 Climatic Factors	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: this approach is about better evidence and a policy for protecting green spaces and therefore effects relative to baseline will be minimal. However, there should be positive effects relative to a “do-nothing” continuation of existing policies.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: site-specific developer requirements could be added where a development is close to or impinges upon a green space or network to increase planting or enhance active travel accessibility.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
7 Material Assets	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on material assets because it is about better auditing and protection of green spaces.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p>

	Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =
8 Cultural Heritage	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: this approach is about better evidence and a policy for protecting green spaces and therefore effects relative to baseline will be minimal. However, there may be positive effects relative to a “do-nothing” continuation of existing policies for example where Designed Landscapes, listed building settings or battlefields overlap with protected green spaces and networks.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
9 Landscape	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: this approach is about better evidence and a policy for protecting green spaces and therefore effects relative to baseline will be minimal. However, there may be positive effects relative to a “do-nothing” continuation of existing policies for example where better audited green spaces and networks are also important in landscape terms. The suggested policy of seeking developer contributions towards habitat enhancement should, if implemented, have beneficial effects for landscape.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>

	MAIN ISSUE 8: Placemaking
	<i>Our Preferred approach: our preferred approach is to raise layout and architectural design standards within the development industry via application (and if necessary enforcement) of a Placemaking Audit for all larger development proposals.</i>
SEA Objective	<i>Alternative approaches considered: we have considered the continuation of existing Highland planning policies that affect this issue.</i>
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better layouts would generally include better located, integral green spaces and green network connectivity so there may be indirect positive effects.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
2 Population and Human Health	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better layouts would generally include better active travel connectivity so there may be indirect positive effects for human health.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
3 Soil	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better layouts would generally include better located, integral green spaces and green network connectivity so there may be indirect positive effects.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p>

	<p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
4 Water	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better layouts would generally address drainage, flood risk and the amenity value of water bodies early on in the process so there may be indirect positive effects.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
5 Air	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better layouts should promote a shift to lower pollution travel modes.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
6 Climatic Factors	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better layouts should for example promote a shift to lower or zero carbon emission travel modes and incorporate climate change adaptation measures such as more naturalised surface water drainage infrastructure.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
7 Material Assets	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the Audit includes heat, energy and other resource efficiency aspects and therefore there should be positive effects.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
8 Cultural Heritage	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better layouts and architectural designs would include safeguarding and possible incorporation and enhancement of built and cultural heritage resources. Most optimistically, exemplar developments could become the conservation areas of the future.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
9 Landscape	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: mainly neutral but better layouts and architectural designs should help safeguard urban landscapes.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: successful implementation of the preferred approach will depend upon consistent application and enforcement of the new policies.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>

MAIN ISSUE 9: Meet the needs of an ageing population	
SEA Objective	<p><i>Our Preferred approach:</i> <i>our preferred approach is to ensure an adequate supply of future housing accommodation which has been constructed or adapted to the needs of a population with an older average age.</i></p> <p><i>Alternative approaches considered:</i> <i>we have considered the continuation of existing Highland planning policies that affect this issue.</i></p>
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on biodiversity unless accommodating the ageing population means an increase in the total number of new housing units required or this accommodation is delivered on environmentally sensitive sites.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
2 Population and Human Health	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is intended to have a significant positive effect on the quality of life of residents able to enjoy such wheelchair liveable accommodation.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: the success of the policy depends upon application and enforcement of the policy but also increased Scottish Government subsidy.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: +</p>
3 Soil	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on soil.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
4 Water	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on flooding or the water environment.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
5 Air	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on air quality.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
6 Climatic Factors	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on climatic factors.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>

7 Material Assets	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on material assets.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
8 Cultural Heritage	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on cultural heritage.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>
9 Landscape	<p>Likely effects of preferred approach: the preferred approach is unlikely to have any direct effects on landscape.</p> <p>Likely effects of alternative approaches: a continuation of existing planning policies is unlikely to achieve any net betterment relative to the existing environmental baseline.</p> <p>Mitigation for preferred approach: there is no relevant mitigation for a neutral environmental effect policy approach.</p> <p>Post mitigation score for preferred approach: =</p>

7 Assessment of Development Site Options

How Have We Assessed Each Site?

In 2019, we invited development site suggestions as part of the Plan's 'Call for Sites'. Some of these were too small in scale to be included in the Plan (we are only identifying sites with capacity for 10 or more houses or a similar non-residential equivalent) and/or were too distant from any sizeable settlement – i.e. were in environmentally unsustainable locations relative to their size and proposed use.

Following this initial sieving process, each potential development site allocation was assessed against the following 10 environmental and socio-economic factors to determine whether it should be a preferred, alternative or non-preferred in the Main Issues Report.

1. Water Environment
2. Climate Change
3. Biodiversity
4. Waste and Natural Resources
5. Landscape
6. Cultural Heritage
7. Sustainable Transport
8. Sustainability of Infrastructure
9. Placemaking
10. Delivery

The detailed list of site assessment questions and how we've interpreted them in giving both pre and post mitigation scoring is contained in the Appendix to this Report. **The Appendix differentiates in red text those which are socio-economic. In summary, these are questions 34 (transport network capacity), 38 (school capacity), 40 (water and sewerage capacity) and 45-47 (viability).**

The Results of Our Assessment

The full results for all sites are available online at 'highland.gov.uk/imf' (click on the background documents link). These are searchable via a map to make it easier for those only interested in a particular site or locality to find the results most relevant to them.

How Has SEA Influenced Our Development Site Preferences?

For those interested in the whole of a settlement then the following section explains how SEA considerations have influenced our site preference thinking for each place. This is the best scale at which to understand how difficult choices have to be made. Very few potential development sites are totally free of environmental and other constraints and often a final decision is a compromise between several competing factors. **References to socio-economic factors are highlighted under a different specific sub heading to ensure clear separation from consideration of environmental effects.** Our aim in this section is to explain and be more transparent about how we reach a professional holistic judgment in balancing all these factors. Flooding issues have been singled out because the Council has committed to take a more strategic approach to flood risk assessment. Flooding problems and solutions are often catchment wide and therefore looking at one site in isolation rarely identifies all the sources

of a flooding problem or a comprehensive solution. We regard this section of the Report as the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the Plan. A list of the Council's current, programmed flood risk schemes and management plans is available via pages 16 and 17 from [this report](#).

Alness

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

There is potential flooding identified along Alness River, Contullich Burn and Achnagarron Burn as well as potential coastal flooding for land south of the A9. There are also small areas of potential flooding identified across the town. For any sites potentially affected mitigation has been included asking for a Flood Risk Assessment and stating that no development should happen on areas identified at risk.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

There are lots of Core Paths around Alness, particularly around Alness River, Coulhill Wood and at the coast adjacent to Alness Point. None of the Core Paths should be adversely impacted by any of the preferred sites but mitigation has been included where appropriate for linkages to be provided to existing core paths for both active travel and recreational purposes. National Cycle Route 1 also passes through the town. There are TPOs along Contullich Burn which are not impacted by any sites. There is also one around Teaninich House which is adjacent to a preferred allocation for mixed use (AL09). Mitigation has been included that development and construction should ensure no impact on the woodland and in particular the roots. Coulhill Wood is native woodland and is adjacent to and forms part of allocations at Darroch Brae. Mitigation is unlikely to avoid significantly affecting the woodland interests however compensatory planting would be required. There is also native woodland at Crawl Park which is not impacted by any sites. SPA, SAC, SSSI and Ramsar designations at the Cromarty Firth are adjacent to land allocated at Alness Point. Alness Point is an established Business Park with capacity for six additional sites for employment opportunities. There is potential for significant effects on the integrity of the sites depending on construction timing and methods. Appropriate mitigation has been included and it has been flagged that HRA may be required. Prime agricultural land can be found at the southern half of Alness East, Darroch Brae, Obsdale and south of the A9.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

In the settlement hierarchy Alness is classed as a tier 1 settlement and as such is one of the most suitable locations for growth. It is a key service and employment centre and Alness Academy has also been recently upgraded. Housing growth is focused at the eastern side of the town, in an area known as Alness East. Active travel links to the town are however poor with missing footpaths and narrow roads and as part of wider mitigation it is considered imperative that a masterplan approach is taken for the wider expansion area which could deal with issues such as active travel. For Alness East to expand in the longer term it is very likely that a new/upgraded junction will be required onto the A9 as the existing junction at Rosskeen is not suitable for large amounts of traffic. There are also some housing sites which are actively being developed – Whitehills, Dalmore and Willowbank Park – and these are being shown as preferred sites.

Ardersier

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Expansion options in Ardersier are limited due to its coastal location and risk of coastal flooding to the north and fluvial flooding to the south.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

The land to the west slopes steeply upwards and the flatter land above is exclusively prime agricultural farmland. The main vehicular accesses into the village converge to a single, narrow road (High Street)

which leads to traffic congestion. The Milton of Connage Farm provides a logical southern settlement edge and provides an attractive entrance from the B9039. As an old fishing village, Ardersier has a rich built heritage with several listed buildings and conservation area. Scheduled monuments are located at the north and south of the settlement.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

A major new housing development is underway on the land adjoining the existing housing estate at the south east of the village. This is likely to address local housing needs for many years to come. The local primary school is expected to need an extension but has capacity to expand to accommodate further settlement growth, however, Culloden Academy is forecast to experience significant capacity pressures over the coming years. A new secondary school in Inverness is planned but funding has not been secured. Limited employment opportunities exist within Ardersier and active travel and public transport to Nairn and Inverness are far less competitive than private vehicle.

Auldearn

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Small watercourses to the north and west pose fluvial flood risk to certain areas of land adjoining Auldearn.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

The main constraints are the A96 trunk road to the north and the Auldearn Battlefield designation which covers most of the village and the land surrounding it. The logical expansion sites which would round off or infill Auldearn either do not have landowner/developer interest or are potentially constrained by poor access arrangements. Other sites proposed would elongate the settlement, have a greater landscape impact or affect areas of prime agricultural land.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Auldearn is a relatively small village with services limited to shop, restaurant and a primary school which is currently over capacity and the roll is expected to increase further. With a major housing development recently completed at Montrose Avenue, and the lack of facilities, there is no pressing need for further housing allocations at present.

Avoch

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Coastal and fluvial flood risks limit potential settlement expansion options and the combined sewer system within the heart of the old village creates network capacity including potential sewer flooding issues. The only preferred allocation with known risks is the harbour where only harbour related uses will be supported. The steeply sloping, peripheral development sites are non preferred for a variety of reasons including their uncertain foul and surface water drainage provision.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

The growth of the settlement is limited by a range of physical and environmental constraints. The central conservation area and the wooded margins (including the Designed Landscape at Rosehaugh) of the village also constrain growth. Given the above, we have chosen not to promote significant growth in this settlement. Instead, we believe that existing planning permissions and land allocations should be completed but no new land identified for development. Land at Muiralehouse is the least constrained land that lies closest to the village's community and commercial facilities. The new sites suggested at Cemetery Hill and East of Knockmuir raise visual and landscape impact issues because they are elevated and exposed, 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 constraints and is marginally further from village facilities than site AV01.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

The local primary school is already over capacity. Perhaps most importantly, Avoch is served by a spine road (the A832) which has capacity and safety issues. 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. Sites AV01 and AV02 have current developer interest and have progressed to planning applications. The new sites suggested at Cemetery Hill and East of Knockmuir are accessed via single track roads with poor alignment. The suggested site at Rosehaugh East Drive has woodland and road access constraints. Given the above, we have chosen not to promote significant commuter/holiday accommodation growth in this settlement.

Beauly

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Beauly has fluvial, pluvial (much smaller open ditch watercourse) and groundwater flooding constraints. We have not allocated any development sites below the 5m AOD contour to avoid the fluvial risk. We have suggested mitigation such as development setbacks to address the pluvial risks where allocations contain or are bordered by field ditches. Also, we have preferred the land with the most elevation (and presumed ground water clearance) for the settlement's principal expansion area.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Beauly has a good range of community and commercial facilities, employment opportunities and the sustainable travel advantage of a rail halt. We believe that 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 and environmental constraints that should be respected. Taking account of these we have supported the continued expansion of Beauly but in a compact form. Relieving central congestion and pollution should also benefit the historic village square and its Conservation Area. We intend that, 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.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Beauly is an economically viable location for future growth. However, there are service capacity constraints that should be respected. 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 we have supported the continued expansion of Beauly 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. 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. As an initial view, we have favoured land in north Beauly ahead of that in south Beauly because it appears more viable in terms of ownership and developer interest.

Cawdor

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

There are a number of environmental constraints in and around Cawdor. The Cawdor Burn, which runs through the eastern side of Cawdor, poses a significant constraint on strategic expansion to the north.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Land to the north east and west is prime agricultural land and there are a number of pockets of mature native woodland. There is also a rich built and cultural heritage, including a Conservation Area covering the village which incorporates a range of Listed Buildings and the Cawdor Castle Garden and Designed Landscape. Cawdor also scores poorly in terms of the sustainability and connectivity questions. Public transport is limited to a bi-daily bus service and it is beyond acceptable active travel distances to key facilities.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Due to the major environmental constraints together with sustainability concerns we are not proposing to allocate any sites for development in Cawdor. Instead we propose to include it as a Growing Settlement which will support incremental, small scale rounding off and infilling.

Conon Bridge

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Conon Bridge has significant fluvial flood risk issues from several watercourses. Our site selection process has taken account of these issues by a mixture of not supporting a site containing watercourses (Schoolhouse Belt) and without practicable mitigation (the Former Petrol Filling Station) or, specifying and suggesting mitigation where this will be practicable (a development setback for development at Braes of Conon and a flood protection scheme dependency for the Drouthy Duck and Pescanova sites).

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Other than flooding issues, Conon Bridge has fewer constraints than many other settlements. It has a rail halt and no public sewerage capacity constraints. However, other factors indicate that that growth should be tempered for example the settlement's generally northwesterly aspect is poor in terms of solar gain potential. Land at Braes of Conon has the sustainability benefit of lying close to the primary school and principal village shop. We have tried to favour redevelopment of brownfield rather than the better agricultural land but contamination risk issues reduce the potential of the former.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Conon Bridge has trunk road connectivity, a rail halt, no water and sewerage capacity constraints and a plentiful supply of viable development land. However, other factors indicate that that growth should be tempered and phased in step with infrastructure capacities. The local primary school that also serves Maryburgh residents is over capacity. Land at Braes of Conon is most viable with serious and current developer interest

Contin

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Land to the west of the A835 is subject to pluvial flood risk from the River Black Water. However it is being proposed that it will be re-categorised as a Growing Settlement with no allocations, but instead any development proposals would be assessed against Placemaking Priorities. A Placemaking Priority has been included that any development close to the River Black Water will need to ensure that it is not at flood risk.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

It is being proposed that Contin will be re-categorised as a Growing Settlement with no allocations, but instead any development proposals would be assessed against Placemaking Priorities. A Placemaking Priority has been included to ensure that mitigation is provided for any potential impact on the Preas

Mairi chambered cairn. A Placemaking Priority has also been included to ensure that any development is set back from the numerous mature trees around the village.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Contin provides relatively few services and facilities and it is serviced by limited public transport. Children must travel to Strathpeffer and Dingwall for Primary and Secondary schooling. As such it is considered that it is not a suitable location for significant amounts of growth and is better suited for small scale development and infill opportunities.

Cromarty

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Cromarty, although coastal has few coastal development sites available for consideration and therefore this isn't a significant issue. Similarly, there are no pronounced pluvial or small watercourse issues affecting the handful of suggested development sites.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Cromarty's peripherality, raised beach physical constraint and built heritage quality have all led us to allocate very few development sites. We believe it would be imprudent to encourage commuting from the town because of the lack of effective public transport travel options to major work centres, and the length and carbon impact of car journeys. Also, the town's sewage works has very little spare capacity. Land at Sandilands is the best candidate for expansion because of its centrality and visual containment. We have non preferred the suggested development site above Cromarty's escarpment on landscape and sustainability grounds because it is visually and physically separate from the main part of the town.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Cromarty's lack of local employment opportunities and village centre congestion issues along the A832 suggest it is not suitable for significant growth. The preferred site is for a dedicated campervan site to better manage and divert demand for that type of overnight accommodation from the Links area.

Croy

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

There are no significant flood risk concerns in or around Croy.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Expansion to the south is not possible due to the large, continual strip of ancient woodland. The housing on the southern edge of Croy face inwards, away from the adjoining B9091 which results in it being a fast road and a barrier to development. The village scores relatively poorly from a sustainability point of view with a lack of employment opportunities, limited public transport options, distant from key facilities and the primary school under pressure. Permission for 100 houses has been granted on land to the west of Croy and development is underway. The developer has put forward that a second phase could be delivered on land immediately to the north. We are non preferring the site given the scale of development already planned in Croy and that it is prime agricultural land. Land proposed to the east is not a logical expansion of the settlement as it's poorly connected to the existing settlement both physically and visually.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Over the past 10 years or so, Croy has experienced significant growth in relation to its size. Whilst the site options do not have unsurmountable constraints, the lack of capacity in the primary school, limited

facilities in the village and its disconnect to main urban and employment centres leads to Croy performing very poorly from a sustainability perspective.

Culbokie

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Culbokie has few flood risk issues because of its distance from the coast and sizeable watercourses. Most subsoils allow within curtilage infiltration and the sewerage network is adequate.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

However, 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. Culbokie's elevation and generally northwesterly aspect present a relatively poor microclimate and its extended linear pattern makes within village active travel less likely. Taking account of these development factors we have only supported completion of already permitted sites, a brownfield redevelopment opportunity and completion of established infill sites. 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.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

The local population is declining and it would not be cost effective to promote more sustainable travel from this location. Moreover central land is unavailable for development.

Dingwall

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Dingwall has potential pluvial and coastal flooding issues. The existing allocation to the East of Dingwall Business Park remains as a preferred option as it sits outwith flood risk. The suggested extension to the north of this are almost all completely within flood risk and are unlikely to be suitable for development. There is a new site identified at Craig Road for community use. The site is at risk of coastal flooding however it is considered that it's use as park area could be achieved despite the flood risk. Housing uses that were suggested around the riverside area via the Call for Sites, are not being identified as preferred land uses due to flood risk.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Dingwall has a Conservation Area and there are several listed buildings within it, however there are no site allocations near it. Sites on the eastern side of the town in particular Dingwall Riverside North and Craig Road are within close proximity of the Cromarty Firth SPA, SSSI and Ramsar. Where appropriate recreational management plans and the retention and protection of trees with adequate separation from development, are being provided as possible mitigation. Native woodland, much of which is covered by TPOs, is prevalent around Dingwall North and between the A862 and the shoreline. Mitigation has been included for sites to retain and protect boundary trees and ensure adequate separation between woodland and any development. Land to the north at Upper Dochcarty, land adjacent to the Old Evanton Road and south of Ferry Road are all classed as prime agricultural land. These sites have all been identified as alternative, prime farmland being one of the considerations but not the only one in determining this preference.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Within the settlement hierarchy Dingwall is classed as a tier 1 settlement suitable for larger amounts of growth and considered most sustainable in terms of services and employment opportunities and public

transport routes available. There is a Primary and Secondary School however both are requiring major extensions and developer contributions will reflect this. Expansion at Dingwall North has been constrained by the need to deliver import transport infrastructure. However this area remains the preferred future direction of growth for housing and the identification of the preferred sites in Dingwall North should enable progress with closing the gap on two sections of the road which would link Dochcarty Road and Old Evanton Road, providing a possible circular route for public transport.

Dores

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Whilst the extent of flood risk is relatively small across Dores, small watercourses run through the main gap site in the centre of the village and to the north.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Dores is nestled between Loch Ness and the wooded hill side which adjoins it. This means that development options are limited with most sites experiencing topography or woodland constraints. There is also a lack of active travel provision on the B roads to the south. Dores scores poorly from a sustainability point of view as there are few local facilities, it's a long distance to walk or cycle to Inverness and the school is detached from the village. For these reasons, we are limiting development opportunities unless they are linked to improvements to facilities.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Dores is identified within Tier 4 as there are very limited facilities within the settlement and an infrequent bus service is the only public transport option available to Inverness. The primary school is also detached from the village. The effectiveness of virtually all the sites is questionable due to issues related to landownership, topography, flood risk and tree cover. Land south of the church is the only site being preferred as there is developer interest and it is the most central to the village and its facilities. Other sites may have potential but more information is required to determine their suitability, effectiveness and contribution towards making Dores more sustainable.

Drumnadrochit

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Drumnadrochit has significant fluvial flood risks from two principal watercourses. A flood protection scheme is proposed for the River Enrick which will protect parts of the settlement and as an indirect consequence one of the development sites suggested. Another, closer to Milton is not supported primarily for flood risk reasons.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Drumnadrochit has the sustainability benefits of a range of facilities beyond what would be expected for the size of the settlement even including its wider Glenurquhart catchment population. However, it is not a sustainable location for significant further growth. Car based travel to larger facilities and work is still necessary. Add in the physical constraints of the steep surrounding hill slopes, and the environmental and amenity benefits of preserving local greenspace then we believe that a cautious approach to future growth is sensible. Therefore we have only supported "legacy" allocations at Drum Farm and adjoining the new Co-op store but not preferred the suggested new expansion area to the rear of the health centre.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

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 restrictions on new access to the A82 trunk road and significant new growth is not appropriate. Other than the sites above, 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.

Evanton

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

There is potential for flooding along the River Sgitheach and this is reflected in the assessment of the wider site at Teandallon. There is also some potential for some surface water flooding at Culcairn. As such, Flood Risk Assessments will be required and no development should happen on areas shown to be at risk of flooding.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Land at Culcairn is classed as prime agricultural land as is the northern half of the site at Teandallon. A small straightened watercourse runs through Teandallon and mitigation is being suggested that it should be restored to a more natural route. At Teandallon there are also trees on the southern boundary which will need to be protected and mitigation is included that groundworks and development should not adversely affect the trees.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

In the settlement hierarchy Evanton is classified as a tier 2 settlement, considered a sustainable location suitable for modest amounts of growth. Whilst bus services are available and there is a desire to re-open the rail halt, for most residents the use of a private car is still necessary. If a rail halt were to be provided it would potentially allow further growth of the village but without it, growth should only be modest. Evanton provides a number of services and also a Primary School and is well located in terms of access to strategic employment centres. It is unlikely that a district heat network would be economically viable as there is no high anchor load and high concentrated heat demand. Development at Teandallon is providing improved active travel links into the centre of the village. Culcairn is slightly more remote from the village centre amenities and the Primary School and active travel links will be required.

Fort Augustus

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Fluvial flood risk affects the lowest part of the settlement but most potential development sites are at a higher level so flood risk hasn't been a determining factor in deciding our site preferences.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Fort Augustus has other sustainability benefits. Even though it only accommodates a stable, year round population of just over 600 it 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. However, the same transport, river and tourism corridors create severance of active travel and other movement across the village, junction constraints, and built heritage features that should be protected. 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. We believe tree loss issues can be mitigated by compensatory planting provision. We believe that any remaining development potential at the Abbey should be limited because of its heritage constraints.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Education, water and sewerage facilities have adequate existing or programmed capacity. Property interests have dictated viability and therefore our final site preferences. The patchwork ofcrofting tenancies and ownership within the village continues to thwart attempts to assemble larger development sites and therefore we are only supporting consolidation rather than seeking to promote expansion of Fort Augustus. Land south of the Old Convent is already subject to developer interest and if successful then could be extended.

Fortrose and Rosemarkie

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Fortrose and Rosemarkie, although coastal have few coastal development sites available for consideration and therefore this isn't a significant issue. Similarly, there are no pronounced pluvial or small watercourse issues affecting the handful of suggested development sites although land at Greenside Farm did raise issues that were addressed at planning application/permission stage.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Despite its combined size of around 2,350 permanent residents, its role as a "town centre" for a larger rural hinterland, and higher order facilities such as the Academy and Leisure Centre, these settlements are not an environmentally sustainable location for further significant growth. Add in prime agricultural land, steep inland slopes and heritage constraints then the justification for constraint is even more pronounced. Accordingly, we have only preferred sites that were previously allocated and/or where a planning permission has been issued.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Fortrose and Rosemarkie are not an economically viable 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. Fortrose and Rosemarkie have very limited additional waste water treatment capacity and both its high and primary schools are near or over capacity.

Inchmore

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

The eastern end of Inchmore is affected by small watercourse flood risk which has been one factor in the non preference of land within this settlement. The underlying clay soils are thought to inhibit within curtilage infiltration.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

We have assessed that Inchmore is no longer a sustainable location for significant growth because of poor public transport connectivity. Instead we believe it should be classified as a growing settlement which means that smaller scale development may be supported.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Inchmore is not an economically viable location for significant growth. Its primary school has closed, its spine road is no longer trunked, local employment opportunities are limited, high voltage lines pass overhead, 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.

Invergordon

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Despite its coastal location, Invergordon does not experience significant flood risk issues. Land around the northern sides of the town act as floodplains for the small watercourses at Tomich and Broomhill but the land does not form part of the site options. Most subsoils allow within curtilage infiltration and the sewerage network is adequate.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

In terms of environmental factors, site preferences for Invergordon have largely been influenced by the presence of prime agricultural land (including sites at the House of Rosskeen and north of Invergordon Mains), relatively limited active travel connections and distant from key facilities (including land north of Saltburn). Potential land contamination issues exist on several sites and will require developer requirements for further assessment and mitigation.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Invergordon benefits from a wide range of services and facilities, including primary and secondary schools, hospital and shops, and has a strong employment base. However, residential development pressure remains low, which is reflected in the decline in population since the last census and the reduction in the number of sites being preferred for allocation.

Inverness City

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

The coastal location of the city combined with the presence of the River Ness and Caledonian Canal mean that a range of flooding issues are present across the city. These are particularly pronounced along the northern coastal edge where coastal flood risk presents issues for existing built-up areas and limits potential future development. Similarly, land along the banks of the River Ness is subject to fluvial flood risk. Work in recent years on the River Ness Flood alleviation scheme has addressed risk to existing properties. Future development along this blue corridor will be limited, preferred land at Inverness Harbour will only be acceptable for certain more vulnerable uses if a comprehensive assessment of flood risk, and biodiversity impacts, can be presented during the preparation of the Proposed Plan. Elsewhere, there are areas of pluvial and fluvial flood risks due to man-made interventions, like the banks of the Caledonian Canal. Risks at Inverness East are to a degree being mitigated by Council-led schemes such as the Culloden and Smithton Flood Alleviation Scheme. For sites that are identified as being at risk of flooding, assessment and mitigation measures are suggested as requirements for the Proposed Plan to address these risks.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Major expansion of the city proposed at Fairways Golf course and Welltown of Leys is not supported due to the potential adverse impacts on Climate Change as a result of increasing the amount of people that would be dependent on unsustainable, carbon-intensive and car-based modes of transport for everyday journeys. Coupled with the potential risk of significant adverse impacts on landscape and visual amenity and on the city's character then these sites are not proposed for inclusion. A range of in-fill sites and consolidation of the existing city expansion areas are preferred because they have a range of permissions, where SEA factors have been identified and mitigated and/or the sites present sustainable, effective and lower impact options that will meet the city's development needs over the next 20 years.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Pressure for housing land in the city remains a major challenge and priority for the Council. The majority of demand for housing, across the range of tenures, is in Inverness. The MIR has identified a range of effective sites with willing landowners to take forward development to tackle this challenge. Major infrastructure funding that will support the development of these sites, such as the East Link Road, further emphasise the role of these areas in tackling one of the city's most pressing socio-economic issues. Access to green and blue infrastructure for physical and mental well being is recognised in the MIR Main Issues and, as such, work will be undertaken in preparation of the Proposed Plan to properly identify and safeguard these natural assets.

Kiltarlity

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

The prospective development sites are not subject to mapped fluvial flood risk but there may be small watercourse field ditch issues that need to be addressed via development setback mitigation. Otherwise most of the sites are free draining and therefore should be suitable for within curtilage infiltration.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

However, in wider sustainability terms Kiltarlity parish's main settlement at Allarburn has a dormitory function. Local employment opportunities, commercial facilities and public transport connectivity are all very limited. Accordingly, our site preferences only favour completing sites that already benefit from allocation in the existing development plan and/or have planning permission. The Old Mill is a brownfield redevelopment opportunity that could provide local opportunities. Otherwise, the larger suggested sites would breach servicing and landscape capacities, and increase car based travel.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

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. Land at Glebe Farm is preferred because it is part developed, part serviced and close to the local primary school.

Kirkhill

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

The prospective development sites are not subject to mapped fluvial flood risk but there may be small watercourse field ditch issues that need to be addressed via development setback mitigation. Otherwise most of the sites are free draining and therefore should be suitable for within curtilage infiltration.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

However, in wider sustainability terms, Kirkhill 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. 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. Land at Groam Farm is close to the local primary school. The builder's yard is central to the community, has been underutilised for several years and would therefore benefit from redevelopment. Other sites have not been supported because they are more distant from the settlement's facilities and would therefore not encourage active travel.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Kirkhill's 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. Land at Groam Farm is close to the local primary school and is already part serviced. Other sites have not been supported because they have economic viability issues.

Maryburgh

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Most of the prospective development sites are not subject to mapped fluvial flood risk but there are some that contain watercourses that will need to be addressed via development setback mitigation. The presence of multiple watercourses within site MB05 has been one factor in most of it not being preferred.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

In wider sustainability terms, Maryburgh is a dormitory settlement that has lost population and facilities. More positively, water and sewerage capacity is adequate to support further growth. Therefore, we haven't supported significant future growth at Maryburgh. We have preferred mainly central sites. The upper slopes of land above the Maryburgh Roundabout are sensitive in visual and landscape impact terms and are therefore not supported.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Positively, landowners are prepared to make land available and there are few physical constraints that would inhibit development. Unfortunately, the road network leading to the peripheral expansion site options is single track and difficult to widen in terms of third party landowner dependency. Therefore, we haven't supported significant future growth at Maryburgh. We have preferred the most central sites apart from land close to the Maryburgh A835 roundabout which we believe offers competitive advantage as an employment site because of its visibility and good road connections.

Muir of Ord

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Most of the prospective development sites are not subject to mapped fluvial flood risk but there are some that contain watercourses that will need to be addressed via development setback mitigation. The MO10 site at Highfield has been non preferred partly because of watercourse issues.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Muir of Ord is an environmentally sustainable location for further significant growth. Crucially, Muir of Ord also has a good range of local facilities, local employment opportunities and an improving rail service connection. Because of these factors we have chosen to reallocate the majority of previously identified allocations. Central land should be safeguarded for enhanced community facilities with better connections to adjoining housing areas. We wish to safeguard and expand local employment opportunities at the distillery and industrial estate. The latter site will lead to tree loss and in recognition of this we have suggested compensatory planting mitigation.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Muir of Ord is an economically viable location for further significant growth. Unusually for a Highland settlement it has plentiful, relatively flat and relatively well drained land. Similarly, the town has few infrastructure constraints - water, sewage treatment and school capacities are adequate. Crucially, Muir of Ord also has a good range of local facilities, local employment opportunities and an improving rail service connection. Because of these factors we have chosen to 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. We wish to safeguard and expand local employment opportunities at the distillery and industrial estate. The latter site will lead to tree loss and in recognition of this we have suggested compensatory planting mitigation.

Munlochy

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

The lower lying sites are affected by watercourse flood risk and we have added development setback mitigation to the central site that has already got a minded to grant planning application decision to address this issue. The other flood risk affected sites have not been supported for a variety of reasons including flood risk.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Munlochy has a primarily dormitory function with commuter housing pressures. Munlochy lacks sufficient local employment opportunities or good enough public transport connectivity to make it a sustainable location for further growth. Taking account of this we have constrained future development potential to the completion of existing allocated and permitted sites. Redevelopment or refurbishment of the transport facility at ML04 should lead to a net environmental improvement.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Munlochy has a primarily dormitory function with commuter housing pressures created by the settlement's location close to major work centres and its attractive outlook towards Munlochy 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, 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 have constrained future development potential to the completion of existing allocated and permitted sites.

Nairn

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

The River Nairn is a source of both coastal flood risk around the Fishertown areas and fluvial flood risk to the south of Nairn. Large areas of land around the Firhall, Househill and Crook form important flood plains which need to be protected. Heavy rainfall has potential for surface water urban drainage, agricultural run-off, combined sewer overflows and treated sewage effluent to cause water pollution. Scottish Water & SEPA jointly commissioned a study which found a combination of sources affecting water quality at Nairn, mainly agricultural run-off upstream. Scottish Water are actively upgrading and maintaining infrastructure to minimise adverse impacts during peak times.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

With many of the main facilities, including both primary schools and town centre, being centrally located, a key consideration for development proposals in Nairn has been the ability to deliver competitive sustainable transport options. The railway line poses a significant constraint to Nairn South and large parts of the land are prime agricultural land. The land to the west is further detached from the town and a bottle neck at the junction of the A96 and Tradepark Road means active travel upgrades will be difficult to achieve. The developable parts of the land put forward at Granny Barbour Road would further elongate the town and the scale of development is unlikely to be required. The town centre has redevelopment opportunities and offers the high levels of sustainability.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Nairn is the third largest settlement in Highland and provides a wide range of economic and social functions for the wider Nairnshire county. Long term housing rates have been relatively high and this has helped strengthen the role of Nairn and support an increasing population. However, the supply of new open market housing could dry up when Kingsteps, the last planned development at Lochloy, is completed. Few proposals have come forward for employment related development in Nairn. Land for the expansion of the sawmill at the Nairn South has been shown as Alternative due to outstanding transport issues and the effectiveness of the site. To protect the town centre, land put forward speculatively for retail and business uses near the Sainsbury's supermarket have not been preferred.

North Kessock

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

The suggested Bellfield Farm expansion area has watercourse and waterbody issues and this flood risk has been one factor in not supporting that area. Otherwise, flood risk hasn't been a determining factor in site preference selection.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

North Kessock is a sustainable location for future growth because it benefits from close proximity to the City of Inverness in terms of relatively easy access to employment. 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 Beauly Firth and its associated 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. Given the above, we have preferred limited development on land to the west of the village plus sites closer to the centre of the village. The larger suggested expansion area on the west part of Bellfield Farm has not been favoured because it is more distant from the village's facilities and a large area of prime farmland would be irreversibly lost.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

North Kessock is a viable location for future growth because it 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. 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. Given the above, we have preferred limited development on land to the west of the village plus sites closer to the centre of the village to better manage travel and visitor impacts via a Park and Ride and a campervan servicing site.

Seaboard Villages

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

The southern end of land at South of Shore Street is adjacent to the coast and is at risk of coastal flooding. Equally a selection of smaller infill sites that were promoted in the Call for Sites along New Street are at risk of flooding. Flood Risk Assessments are required as mitigation with no development on areas shown to be at risk.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

The southern end of land at South of Shore Street is shown as alternative due to proximity to the SSSI and the Shandwick Stone Scheduled Monument. There is potential for the setting of the Scheduled Monument to be impacted. It is also classed as prime agricultural land. A selection of smaller infill sites that were promoted in the Call for Sites along New Street could end up with loss of land that has some amenity value and loss of views over open water. On balance with this and potential flood risk it is considered that whilst there may be opportunity for a small amount of infill development with appropriate mitigation, this area is not suitable for allocating for housing in its entirety.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Within the settlement hierarchy Seaboard Villages is classed as a partially sustainable main settlement which is suitable for a small amount of growth. There is a Primary School with capacity for a modest amount growth and pupils must travel to Tain for secondary education. There has been a decrease in bus services in recent times making many residents more dependent on private cars for accessing services further afield and employment opportunities. Business/light industrial land at Balintore Industrial Estate and a potential new site at Cadboll Industrial Estate, are shown as preferred options in a bid to retain and attract further local employment opportunities. A district heat network is not considered economically viable due there being no anchor load and the population is too small.

Strathpeffer

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

There is potential for flood risk from the Kinellan Burn for the sites at Kinellan West and Kinellan North and as such a developer requirement has been included asking for a Flood Risk Assessment and no development within areas shown to be at risk from flooding. However it should be recognised that development has started on Kinellan South. There is potential for some surface water flooding at Kinellan West and a Drainage Impact Assessment is asked for as mitigation.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

There is ancient woodland around Strathpeffer and in particular it borders the site at Nutwood. However, mitigation has been included to ensure enough separation distance is left between any development and the trees. Strathpeffer has a Conservation Area around its historic core and within it there are numerous listed buildings. The site at Nutwood abuts the northern boundary. Mitigation has been included to provide a planted buffer between any development and the Conservation Area.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Within the settlement hierarchy Strathpeffer is classed as a partially sustainable main settlement which is suitable for a small amount of growth. There is a Primary School with room for modest growth. Pupils must travel to Dingwall for secondary education. Public transport options are limited as are employment opportunities. Most residents are dependent on private cars to access most services. It is unlikely that a district heat network would be viable in the settlement and it is not on the mains gas network. However, it is still a safe and attractive place to live and the development at Kinellan affords the opportunity for a well-planned modest expansion of the settlement. On balance, it is considered that a small amount of growth is the most sustainable option for Strathpeffer.

Tain

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Coastal flooding is mostly confined to land on the eastern side of the railway line and therefore is not a concern for any of the sites identified. There is some surface water flooding potential particularly

around Kirksheaf Road and Tain Royal Academy. Mitigation where necessary for either Flood Risk Assessment or Drainage Impact Assessment is included for sites.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

There is a Conservation Area in Tain and there are numerous listed buildings within it. Sites at The Grove and at Kirksheaf Road are in closest proximity but are unlikely to have any impact subject to sensitive siting and design mitigation. Designations at the Cromarty Firth and the Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area are all adjacent to Tain. However none of the sites identified in the MIR should have any significant adverse impact or connectivity issues with these designations. Most of the land on the opposite side of the A9 and around Knockbreck is classed as prime agricultural land.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

In the settlement hierarchy Tain is classed as a tier 1 settlement and as such is one of the most suitable locations for growth. The delivery of a new 3-18 school campus is a key aspiration for the town. When this aspiration is achieved it will leave a large site around the current Tain Royal Academy available for development. It is considered that this central site is a viable and sustainable redevelopment opportunity which should be pursued for house building in advance of sites on the opposite side of the A9. There is currently a considerable amount of land allocated at Knockbreck, the vast majority of which has not come forward for development. A district heat network could be economically viable in Tain.

Tomatin

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

The River Findhorn flows to the west of the main village and limits further development in that direction. Subsidiaries of the River Findhorn cut through Tomatin but do not pose significant constraints to development options.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

Site preferences have taken account of the large areas of woodland which exist to the west and north and a site's connectivity to local facilities.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

The adopted IMFLDP identified Tomatin for strategic levels of growth. With the dualling of the A9 it was felt that it will become a more attractive location for people commuting to Inverness. However, with a reduced levels of housing growth forecast and a greater focus on directing development opportunities to the most sustainable locations we have not chosen to continue to support the same levels of growth. There are also concerns about the effectiveness of the large allocations. Sites have been preferred for employment related uses and infill housing which will help to strengthen the local community.

Tore

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

Most of the prospective development sites are not subject to mapped fluvial flood risk but there are some that contain watercourses that will need to be addressed via development setback mitigation.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

We have now assessed that a large new/expanded settlement at Tore would not meet our reassessed priority of environmental sustainability. Accordingly, we have only preferred one small housing site at Woodneuk, which benefits from a previous planning permission, would infill a cluster of existing

development and is close to the primary school. Treed land north of the grain mill has potential to absorb expansion of existing operations including larger scale buildings into the local landscape.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Despite its excellent trunk road connectivity we have now assessed that a large new/expanded settlement at Tore would not meet our reassessed priority of economic viability (i.e. Tore is not a location where there is spare existing capacity in supporting infrastructure networks and new capacity cannot 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. Additionally, Tore is a competitive location for industrial and storage uses and existing enterprises may require to be expanded.

Tornagrain

Assessment Against Flooding Issues

On the whole, there are no significant flooding issues at Tornagrain. Drainage impact assessments will need to be carefully considered as part of each phase of development and surface water drainage will be expected to be dealt with on site through suitable mitigation measures.

Assessment Against Other SEA Issues

From a development point of view, the area benefits from relatively few environmental constraints. It is slightly sloping land, from south to north, with pockets of woodland which will be safeguarded. As the site continues to be built out, ensuring suitable levels of transport infrastructure are delivered will be important, including sustainable travel connections to key employment destinations e.g. Inverness Airport Business Park.

Assessment Against Socio-Economic Issues

Tornagrain new town represents a major part of the long term growth strategy for the area. Since the first residents moved in in 2017, house sales continued to increase in number. Ensuring that infrastructure, particularly primary and secondary education, is delivered and enhanced in line with development.

8 Assessment of Different Types and Impacts of Environmental Effects

In our policy and development site options assessments we have attempted to consider all the different types and degrees of significance of impact on the environment of each option. This section details some examples of that consideration.

Cumulative

- In terms of *secondary or indirect effects* we believe that better auditing, protection and where possible enhancement of publicly accessible local green spaces and networks will have a positive, beneficial, indirect effect on human health because, other things being equal, active travel within those spaces and networks should increase.
- An example of consideration of *synergistic effects* (effects that interact with each other and become greater) would be the interaction of our approaches to encourage more sustainable travel choices and to promote a more sustainable settlement hierarchy. The two approaches overlap and coincide in that if a higher proportion of future development occurs within the settlements with the best sustainable travel options then modal shift should be easier to achieve and the combined positive effects should be greater.
- *Additive effects* (incrementally increasing) have been considered for example in reflecting the negative effects of a settlement hierarchy that would allow a continuation of incremental housing development in the countryside and in the smallest settlements of the Plan area – i.e. in environmentally unsustainable locations.

Impacts

- Our policy and development site options assessments consider the *scale of impacts* (their quantitative and geographic extent) by looking at potential effects at the Plan-wide, settlement-wide and site-specific levels and also by scoring at two different and defined (in the Appendix to this Report) levels.
- In terms of *magnitude of impacts* (the scale of impacts relative to the sensitivity or scale of the existing resource) we have tailored the site-specific assessment scoring to take account of these factors for example in terms of flood risk, agricultural land quality and school capacity (the Appendix to this Report contains further details).
- We believe that the *frequency of the impacts* of a development is directly proportional to its scale, density and occupancy e.g. the number of houses and people in a development will to a large degree determine how often an adjoining environmental resource is affected. Our development site assessments take account of the land use and likely density of development proposed
- Similarly, we believe that the *probability of an impact* is directly proportional to its scale, density and occupancy and that these matters have been adequately assessed in applying the site assessment matrix detailed in the Appendix to this Report.
- In terms of the *duration of impacts*, our policy and development site options assessments differentiate short term construction phase effects from those longer term effects that will persist post completion of a development or until related mitigation measures have been fully implemented.
- Finally, in terms of the *reversibility of impacts*, we believe that most built development has relatively permanent, longer term effects and have scored our policy and development site options

accordingly. Demolition or change of use of a building can be achieved but is often not viable or practicable. Even these measures couldn't reverse the loss of prime farmland for example.

9 Monitoring

We will monitor significant environmental effects that may be caused by the implementation of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan. This will include identifying any unforeseen adverse effects and to take appropriate remedial action in addition to mitigation already specified.

The Highland Council has very limited resources to monitor the effects of all of its activities across a geographic area larger than some nation states and therefore our monitoring is focussed on issues and areas where reliable data is readily available. However, we commit to listen to and work with the general public and other stakeholders to identify and investigate environmental effect issues and to evolve appropriate mitigatory or remedial policies and actions.

Planning decisions and processes are far more transparent now than 10 or more years ago via accessibility to more searchable online information and webcasts of important meetings and decisions. Accordingly, our consideration of environmental data and effect matters is also more transparent.

We are always open to suggestions for the use of better environmental baseline data, any suggestions for a better methodology for its interpretation and practicable ways to improve monitoring. Ideally, these suggestions should be made in response to this Report's current consultation as detailed in section 3 above but we would welcome suggestions at any time via devplans@highland.gov.uk. **Section 4 of this Report and the Appendix set out the data and sources we have used in the formulation of the Plan and which we will use to monitor its environmental and other effects.** For brevity these are not restated here. Most of these datasets are now available via public, online, GIS (map based) platforms with an annual or more frequent update cycle which means that now we can react faster to any change in the environmental baseline or environmental effects.

The revamped Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act will lead the Highland Council to obtain or collect more data that, in the future, can be used to enhance the monitoring of the Plan and other planning policy documents. Most relevant to this Report, future local development plans will have a statutory duty to be underpinned by assessments of health needs, water supply capacity, renewable energy sources, children's play areas and open space. Further details are available via <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/contents/enacted>.

10 Summary of Previous Stages - Scoping

The Highland Council's Scoping Report was submitted to the SEA Gateway in August 2019. A copy can be read via [this page](#). This incorporated consideration of initial discussions with and comments from the Consultation Authorities.

All 3 Consultation Authorities responded and their statements follow.

Historic Environment Scotland

Scope and level of detail

We note that the historic environment has been scoped in to the assessment and we are content to agree with this. On the basis of the information provided, we are content with the approach outlined in the scoping report and are satisfied with the scope and level of detail proposed for the assessment, subject to the detailed comments provided below. We welcome the ongoing engagement regarding the approach to the assessment of this plan. While the scoping report is concise in nature we are aware of the work being carried out in relation to the assessment of plan, particularly in reference to consideration of the environmental effects associated with potential spatial components coming through the Call for Sites. We note the policy assessment matrix and are content with this but would suggest that the ability for a neutral effect is included. In terms of the site assessment matrix it would have been beneficial to see a draft matrix at this stage but based on the draft matrix we have previously seen in the draft of this scoping report we are generally content. However, we welcome the opportunity to continue to engage with you throughout the assessment process, particularly in relation to the new procedures for consultation authority engagement that are being trialled as part of this process.

Consultation period for the Environmental Report

We note that you intend to consult on the Main Issues Report and its environmental report for a minimum of 8 weeks. We can confirm that we are content with this timescale. Please note that, for administrative purposes, we consider that the consultation period commences on receipt of the relevant documents by the SEA Gateway.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) / Nature.Scot

The report is brief and focussed but it does pick up the key elements to be considered in the assessment process with the exception of the details of the site assessment criteria and matrix which is still in preparation. Thank you for the opportunity to subsequently discuss the site assessment matrix at our meeting on 21 August. We confirm we are content with this process and we have commented on this separately. We welcome your partnership approach to site assessments and forward to working with you to refine these further. We welcome the scoping in of all the SEA topics and it would be useful to consider geodiversity possibly within the soils or landscape topic. In terms of baseline data, we recommend that you include the data and guidance from the Dynamic Coast National Coastal Change Assessment - <http://www.dynamiccoast.com/>. I appreciate that you are familiar with this and we would be happy to help with the interpretation of the data if necessary. We welcome the consideration of green networks in both the biodiversity and material assets topics. We suggest this is extended to include green and blue networks and the interaction of this infrastructure is also relevant to population and human health. In terms of the assessment methodology, we support the simplicity of the scoring

system but recommend that there is a neutral or no impact category to avoid having to shoe-horn a neutral impact into a negative or positive category. Identifying mitigation to possible significant adverse effects is arguably the most important outcome of the assessment process. We would hope to see a detailed table illustrating what mitigation is proposed; whether this includes specific measures, such as developer requirements, or signposting further consideration of possible mitigation at a lower tier plan; who will be responsible for carrying out the mitigation and by when. We are happy with the 8 week consultation period.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Thank you for your Scoping consultation submitted under the above Act in respect of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2. This was received by SEPA via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 7 August 2019. We very much welcome the pro-active approach you are taking to including us in the development of the new plan and related SEA work. As required under Section 15(2) of the Act, we have considered the document submitted and can confirm that we are content in respect of the scope and level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report (ER). We are also content with the proposed consultation period. We look forward to discussing and hopefully agreeing the proposed site assessment matrix at our next meeting.

How We've Responded to the Consultation Authorities Submissions

We agreed that the recording of neutral effects for both policy and development site assessments should be included and have done so. In the online site assessments, if neutral pre mitigation effects are predicted then the score boxes are left blank and neutral post mitigation effects are referenced in the Post Mitigation comments box. We have also shared a draft of this Report and the development site matrices and completed assessments with the Consultation Authorities prior to the formal publication of the Main Issues Report and this Report. Our site assessments included consideration of the coastal change data referenced by SNH, and both our policy and site assessments considered the environmental effects, of and on, both blue and green networks. Mitigation suggestions are included in this Draft Environmental Report but the specific, full wording of that mitigation will not be added until the Revised Environmental Report stage when the corresponding developer requirement text of the Proposed Plan will have been finalised. Detailed mitigation is best decided when the Council's chosen policies, sites, boundaries, uses and capacities have been determined. Even then it may be misleading to specify the developer and timeframe within which it must complete mitigation because this is unlikely to be known at that point.

Appendix: Site Assessment Questions, Interpretation and Scoring

The following tables set out the 48 detailed questions and scoring criteria we've used in assessing each development site option. We believe these cover the 9 SEA topics as relevant to the Plan and its Inner Moray Firth area. Specifically, each topic is covered by the following numbered questions. Please note there are many overlaps between the topics and therefore only the most relevant question numbers are listed.

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Questions 8,9,10,11,12,
Population and Human Health: Questions
Soil: Questions 16,17,
Water: Questions 1,2,
Air: Question 35
Climatic Factors: Questions 4,5,6,35,36,39
Material Assets: Questions 14,15,18,
Cultural Heritage: Questions 25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32
Landscape: Questions 20,21,22,23,42,43

The following questions cover separate socio-economic considerations; 34,38,40,45,46,47. These are clearly identified in gold in the tables that follow.

We have ordered the questions into the following 10 sections.

1. Water Environment
2. Climate Change
3. Biodiversity
4. Waste and Natural Resources
5. Landscape
6. Cultural Heritage
7. Sustainable Transport
8. Sustainability of Infrastructure
9. Placemaking
10. Delivery

Each section has more than one question and each question is explained and then given a description of what circumstances would result in each site/proposal being given a pre and post mitigation effect score of:

"--" which means significant negative effects;

"-" which means minor negative effects;

"+" which means minor positive effects; or

"++" which means significant positive effects.

The full results for all sites are available online at 'highland.gov.uk/imf' (click on the background documents link). These are searchable via a map to make it easier for those only interested in a particular site or locality to find the results most relevant to them. The details include the answers to the questions and where relevant an explanation of the scores and any mitigation required to reduce

adverse effects and magnify positive effects. If neutral pre mitigation effects are predicted then the score boxes are left blank and neutral post mitigation effects are referenced in the Post Mitigation comments box.

1 Water Environment

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
1. Will the proposal have a direct effect on a named River Basin Management Plan water body?	Identify relevant RBMP body and confirm its status. Consider site's potential effects and any actions being carried out or proposed by relevant Area Advisory group	Large scale physical changes to the water body required - such as re-routing or hard engineering – which will effect status of water body	Small physical changes to the water body required - such as new watercourse crossings	Small physical improvements - such as improved watercourse crossings – proposed or covered by developer requirement	Large scale physical improvements – such as river restoration works, removal of abandoned structures – proposed or covered by developer requirement. Developer requirement covering Advisory Group Action.
2. Will the proposal have a direct impact on any other surface water bodies that policy mitigation will not adequately protect?	Consider if the proposal will require direct physical impacts like watercourse crossings, de- culverting or large scale abstraction	Large scale physical changes to the water body required - such as re-routing or hard engineering	Small physical changes to the water body required - such as new watercourse crossings	Small physical improvements - such as improved watercourse crossings – proposed or covered by developer requirement	Large scale physical improvements – such as river restoration works, removal of abandoned structures – proposed or covered by developer requirement.
3. Post-mitigation score	Taking all questions into account, score, with mitigation, site's effects on water environment	Proposal could have significant negative impact on the water environment	Proposal could have a minor negative impact on water environment	Proposal could have a small or local scale positive impact on water environment	Proposal could have significant/widespread positive impact on water environment

2 Climate Change

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
4. Will the proposal be affected by or have an impact on existing flood risk areas?	Use the SEPA 1 in 200 year Flood Map and Historic River Events (Coastal and Fluvial Flood Risk) Consult the advice provided SEPA and THC flood team for local flooding events	>50% of the site is within an area of known flooding or within an indicative map area	1-50% of the site is within or adjacent to an area of known flooding or within or adjacent to an indicative map area	Including a Developer Requirement for detailed Flood Risk Assessment and that no development to take place in areas at risk of flooding	Including a Developer Requirement for detailed Flood Risk Assessment and that no development to take place in areas at risk of flooding and that delivers flood risk benefits elsewhere

5. Will the proposal be affected by or have an impact on predicted climate change flood risk areas (1 in 1000 year flood map)?	Use the SEPA 1 in 1000 Flood Map (Coastal and Fluvial Flood Risk) Consult the advice provided by THC flood team for local flooding events	>50% of the site is within an area of known flooding or within an indicative map area	1-50% of the site is within or adjacent to an area of known flooding or within or adjacent to an indicative map area	Including a Developer Requirement for detailed Flood Risk Assessment and that no development to take place in areas at risk of flooding	Including a Developer Requirement for detailed Flood Risk Assessment and that no development to take place in areas at risk of flooding and that delivers flood risk benefits elsewhere
6. Is the proposal in a coastal location? Is it likely to be affected by or have a significant effect on coastal erosion or natural coastal processes?	Use the Dynamic Coast Webmap to identify any coastal erosion issues related to site	The proposal is in an area of significant coastal erosion and/ or will have a significantly negative impact on coastal erosion	Proposal is in an area of minor coastal erosion and/ or will have a minor negative impact on coastal erosion	Proposal includes mitigation to address local erosion issues	Proposal includes mitigation that will address widespread erosion issues
7. Post-mitigation score	Taking all of the questions into account, score, with mitigation identified, score the proposal against climate change	The proposal is at risk of significant flood or coastal erosion risk and/or would have a significantly negative impact on coastal erosion	The proposal is at risk of flood or minor coastal erosion risk and/or would have a minor negative impact on coastal erosion	The proposal could help to mitigate impacts of local flooding and/or erosion issues	The proposal could help to mitigate impacts of widespread flooding and/or erosion issues

3 Biodiversity

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
8. Will the proposal have a significant effect on national or local areas protected for nature conservation?	Consider all national and local designations in the GIS project/ constraint maps provided (SSSI, NNR, MPA, LNRs)	Development of proposal could have a likely significantly negative effect on national or local areas protected for nature conservation	Development of proposal could have minor negative effect on national or local areas protected for nature conservation	Development of proposal could make a minor contribution to enhancing the integrity of national or local areas protected for nature conservation	Development of proposal could make a significant contribution to enhancing the integrity of national or local areas protected for nature conservation
9. Will the proposal be within, adjacent to, or have connectivity with a European site?	Consider all European Designations in the GIS project constraints maps provided (SPA, SAC)	Development of proposal could have a likely significantly negative effect on European areas protected for nature conservation – flag up HRA required	Development of proposal could have minor negative effect on European areas protected for nature conservation – flag up HRA required	Development of proposal could make a minor contribution to enhancing the integrity of European areas protected for nature conservation	Development of proposal could make a significant contribution to enhancing the integrity of European areas protected for nature conservation

<p>10. Will the proposal have a significant effect on non-designated features (geological conservation review sites, ancient woodlands, Tree Preservation Orders.)?</p>	<p>Consider non-designated features in the GIS project</p>	<p>Development of proposal could have a likely significantly negative effect on non-designated features</p>	<p>Development of proposal could have a minor negative effect on non-designated features</p>	<p>Development of proposal could make a minor positive contribution to on non-designated features</p>	<p>Development of proposal could make a significant positive contribution to enhancing non-designated features</p>
<p>11. Will the proposal have a significant effect on protected species (e.g. European Protected Species, protected mammals, etc.)?</p>	<p>Consider designated proposal in the GIS project as well as woodlands, watercourses and other habitat sensitivities (bats, otters, red squirrel and badgers)</p>	<p>A protected species licence will require to be obtained in order for development to proceed</p>	<p>Protected Species present - further assessment will be required to identify appropriate mitigation to avoid adverse effect</p>	<p>Proposal would lead to a minor enhancement in the connectivity of a habitat corridor or network for movement of wildlife</p>	<p>Proposal would lead to a significant enhancement in the connectivity of a habitat corridor or network for movement of wildlife</p>
<p>12. Will there be significant effect on habitat connectivity (e.g. drainage affecting water levels, tree removal etc.)?</p>	<p>Consider green network connections and how these could be severed or enhanced by the proposal</p>	<p>Proposal would significantly fragment a habitat corridor or network for movement of wildlife, or lead to a significant loss of habitat</p>	<p>Proposal would have a minor negative effect on a habitat corridor or network for movement of wildlife,</p>	<p>Proposal would lead to a minor enhancement in the connectivity of a habitat corridor or network for movement of wildlife,</p>	<p>Proposal would lead to a significant enhancement in the connectivity of a habitat corridor or network for movement of wildlife</p>
<p>13. Post-mitigation score</p>	<p>Taking all of the questions into account, score, with mitigation identified, score the site against Biodiversity</p>	<p>Proposal would have a significant adverse impact on biodiversity</p>	<p>Proposal would have a minor adverse impact on biodiversity</p>	<p>Proposal would have a minor positive impact on biodiversity</p>	<p>Proposal would have a significant positive impact on biodiversity</p>

4 Waste and Natural Resources

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
14. Will the proposal affect quantity, quality or connectivity of open space or the wider green network?	Consider relevant open space audit, OS base and aerial photography of site and wider area.	Proposal would have a significant negative impact on quality, quantity (development of 50% or more of a site valued for its open space/green network), and/or connectivity of open space or the wider green network	Proposal would have a minor negative impact on quality, quantity (development of up to 50% of a site valued for its open space/green network), and/or connectivity of open space or the wider green network	Improves/enhances green network connectivity, or key access network and/or improved access to open space	Proposal would significantly contribute to greater connectivity of green network or open space
15. Will the proposal be on vacant or derelict land, or on other previously used land (brownfield land, potentially contaminated land)?	Check THC Vacant and Derelict Land Survey online. Has the site been used previously- check site history, aerial photography, comments from Contaminated Land Team	Proposal in an area with major potential contamination issues	Proposal in an area with a small amount of potential contamination issues	Minor redevelopment of vacant, derelict or brownfield land and/ or by Including Developer Requirements could facilitate remediation or minor potential contamination issues	Significant/large scale redevelopment of vacant, derelict or brownfield land and/ or by including Developer Requirements could facilitate remediation of major potential contamination issues
16. Will the proposal cause significant effects on carbon rich soils or wetlands?	Check GIS data - SNH Carbon and Peatland Mapping 2016 with importance of 1 or 2	>50% of site is within an area of carbon rich soils/ peat/ wetlands	1-50% of site is within an area of carbon rich soils/ peat/ wetlands	Proposal or Developer Requirement would safeguard a small area of carbon rich soil/wetlands from disturbance	Proposal or Developer Requirement would safeguard a large area of carbon rich soil/wetlands from disturbance
17. Will the proposal effect good quality agricultural soils or locally important croft land?	For good quality agricultural soils check GIS data LCA score 3.1 or above (prime agricultural land); for croft land check Crofts GIS layer and aerial photos to indicate productivity	>50% of site is within an area of prime agricultural land or locally important croft land	1-50% of site is within an area of prime agricultural land or locally important croft land	Could give small scale/local protection to good agricultural land or locally important croft land	Could provide significant protection to good agricultural land or locally important croft land
18. Is the proposal adjacent to a waste management site and could compromise its operation?	Check GIS, consider comments from THC Waste and SEPA. Waste recycling points not included as important to close to source recycling and a relatively good neighbour use.	Large scale proposal with sensitive receptors will surround a waste management site and could therefore have a significant negative effect on its operation	Smaller scale proposal with sensitive receptors will be sited next to a waste management site and could therefore have a minor negative effect on its operation	Including Developer Requirements could secure mitigation to address an existing issue/protect the existing waste handling operation	Including Developer Requirements could secure mitigation to address an existing issue/protect the existing waste handling operation and support its expansion

19. Post-mitigation score	Taking all of the questions into account, score, with mitigation identified, score the site against Waste & Natural Resources	Site would have a significant adverse impact on Waste & Natural Resources	Site would have a minor adverse impact on Waste & Natural Resources	Site would have a minor positive impact on Waste & Natural Resources	Site would have a significant positive impact on Waste & Natural Resources
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5 Landscape

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
20. Will there be significant effects on sites designated for landscape interests?	Use GIS Data to identify NSAs and SLAs	Proposal is within or would affect a national or local designated landscape and would lead to a significant loss of or impact on the key features or special landscape qualities	Proposal is within or would affect a national or local designated landscape and would lead to a minor loss or impact on the key features or special landscape qualities	Proposal offers minor or local enhancement to a national or local designated landscape	Proposal significantly enhances the qualities of a national or local designated landscape
21. Will there be significant effects on Wild Land Areas?	Use GIS Data to identify WLAs	Proposal is within or would affect a WLA and would lead to a significant loss of or impact on the key features or special qualities or attributes	Proposal is within or would affect a WLA and would lead to a minor loss or impact on the key features or special qualities or attributes	Proposal offers minor or local enhancement to a WLA	Proposal significantly enhances the qualities of a WLA
22. Will the proposal have significant effects on landscape character and/or visual amenity	Review relationship to underlying landform and relationship to key characteristics and local features (woodland, cultural features, water bodies, coastline etc.) and landscape pattern	The proposal intrudes upon enclosing slopes and is highly visually prominent within the surrounding landscape; The development requires the removal of key landscape characteristics, or dominates over key characteristics and important local features reducing the sense of identity	The proposal sits on enclosing slopes and is visually prominent within the immediate landscape; The development erodes key characteristics and intrudes upon the clarity of key characteristics and local features reducing the sense of identity	The proposal responds well to the local landform; The development maintains the existing underlying landform and experience of key characteristics and features	The proposal is well sited and responds well to the local landform improving creating a cohesive and robust settlement edge; The development reinforces the existing landscape character and creates new opportunities for enjoying key local features

<p>23. Will the proposal have significant effects on the existing settlement character?</p>	<p>Review location; physical visual connectivity; settlement character – cultural, form, scale, pattern, density; separation between settlements; definition of settlement edge</p>	<p>Proposal is physically and visually isolated from the existing settlement edge; Dominates over the scale of the existing settlement and proposal form is contrary to the existing density and pattern of the settlement. The development coalesces with adjacent settlement(s), such that the distinctive identity of individual settlements is lost.</p>	<p>Proposal has a poor relationship in response to the existing settlement form, and is contrary to the existing density and pattern of the existing settlement. The development erodes the separation between settlements and impacts on the identity of individual settlements.</p>	<p>Proposal physically and visually responds to the existing settlement form and improves the settlement edge. Development maintains settlement setting and avoids cohesion with adjacent settlements. The development maintains the existing separation between individual settlements.</p>	<p>Proposal physically and visual responds well to the existing settlement creating a cohesive and well defined settlement edge. The well sited settlement contributes to a robust well defined edge creating a distinctive gateway or approach to the settlement, maintaining separation.</p>
<p>24. Post-mitigation score</p>	<p>Taking all of the questions into account, score, with mitigation identified, score the site against Landscape</p>	<p>Site would have a significant adverse impact on Landscape</p>	<p>Site would have a minor adverse impact on Landscape</p>	<p>Site would have a minor positive impact on Landscape</p>	<p>Site would have a significant positive impact on Landscape</p>

6 Cultural Heritage

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
<p>25. Will the proposal have significant effects on scheduled monuments or their setting?</p>	<p>Scheduled Monuments GIS data Historic Environment Policy for Scotland Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting</p>	<p>Development of site would lead to loss or major alteration of components of a scheduled monument or its setting</p>	<p>Development of site would have a minor negative impact on a scheduled monument and/or its wider setting</p>	<p>Proposal would result in minor enhancement of the setting of a scheduled monument and/or proposal will enable better access to a scheduled monument</p>	<p>Major enhancement of the setting of a scheduled monument</p>
<p>26. Will the proposal have significant effects on locally important archaeological sites?</p>	<p>Highland Historic Environment Record GIS data</p>	<p>Development of site would lead to loss or major alteration of components of a locally important archaeological site or its setting</p>	<p>Development of site would have a minor negative impact on a locally important archaeological site and/or its wider setting</p>	<p>Proposal would result in minor renovation/regeneration of locally important archaeological sites and/or proposal will enable better access to locally important archaeological sites and/or minor enhancement of the setting of a locally important archaeological site</p>	<p>Large-scale redevelopment and reuse a locally important archaeological site and/or enhancement of the setting of locally important archaeological site</p>
<p>27. Will the proposal have significant effects on listed buildings or their setting?</p>	<p>Listed Building GIS data Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting</p>	<p>Development of site would lead to loss or major alteration of components of a listed building and/or its setting</p>	<p>Development of site would have a minor negative impact on a listed building and/or its wider setting</p>	<p>Renovation/ regeneration of listed buildings lying empty/ at risk and/or proposal will enable better access to listed building and or minor enhancement of the setting of a listed building</p>	<p>Large-scale redevelopment and reuse of a listed building and/or enhancement of the setting of a listed building</p>
<p>28. Will the proposal have significant effects on a Conservation Area?</p>	<p>Conservation Area GIS data</p>	<p>Development of site would lead to loss or major alteration of components of a conservation area or its setting</p>	<p>Development of site would have a minor negative impact on a conservation area and/or its wider setting</p>	<p>Proposal will result in minor renovation/ regeneration of a conservation area and /or will enable better access to a conservation area</p>	<p>Proposal will result in large-scale regeneration or a conservation area</p>

<p>29. Will the proposal have significant effects on Garden and Designed Landscapes?</p>	<p>GIS data HES Inventory Search tool Managing Change in the Historic Environment: GDLS Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting</p>	<p>Development of site would lead to loss or major alteration of components of a garden and designed landscape or its setting</p>	<p>Development of site would have a minor negative impact on a garden or designed landscape and/or its wider setting</p>	<p>Proposal will result in minor renovation/regeneration of a garden and designed landscape and /or will enable better access to a garden and designed landscape</p>	<p>Proposal will result in large scale renovation/regeneration of a garden and designed landscape and /or will significantly improve access to a garden and designed landscape</p>
<p>30. Will the proposal have significant effects on an Inventory Historic Battlefield?</p>	<p>GIS data HES Inventory Search tool Managing Change Guidance in the Historic Environment: Battlefields Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting</p>	<p>Development of site would lead to loss or major alteration of components of a historic battlefield or its setting</p>	<p>Development of site would have a minor negative impact on a historic battlefield and/or its wider setting</p>	<p>Proposal will result in minor benefits to the protection and management of the battlefield through understanding and appreciation, education and research or community and visitor interest.</p>	<p>Proposal will result in large scale benefits to the protection and management of the battlefield through understanding and appreciation, education and research or community and visitor interest.</p>
<p>31. Will the proposal have significant effects on a World Heritage Site?</p>	<p>Not relevant to IMF Plan so response will always be 'no' (question retained for future SEA work when the Flow Country may become a WHO)</p>	<p>Development of site would lead to loss or major alteration of components of a World Heritage Sites or its setting</p>	<p>Development of site would have a minor negative impact on a World Heritage Site and/or its wider setting</p>	<p>Proposal will result in minor renovation/regeneration of a World Heritage Site and /or will enable better access to a World Heritage Site</p>	<p>Proposal will result in large scale renovation/regeneration of a World Heritage Sites and /or will significantly improve access to a World Heritage Site</p>
<p>32. Can the proposal enhance or improve public access to the historic environment?</p>	<p>Historic Environment and Access GIS data</p>	<p>Development of site would have a significant negative impact on access to historic environment features within or close by the site</p>	<p>Development of site would have a minor negative impact on access to historic environment features within or close by the site</p>	<p>Proposal will result in minor access improvements to the historic environment features within or close to the site</p>	<p>Proposal will result in significant access improvements to the historic environment features within or close to the site</p>
<p>33. Post-mitigation score</p>	<p>Taking all of the questions into account, score, with mitigation identified, score the site against Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Site would have a significant adverse impact on Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Site would have a minor adverse impact on Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Site would have a minor positive impact on Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>Site would have a significant positive impact on Cultural Heritage</p>

7 Sustainable Transport

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
<p>34. Will this proposal require significant new transport infrastructure?</p>	<p>If the site can be served by constructing only minor connections to walking, cycling or public transport infrastructure (e.g. short path connections to existing routes and stops) or road infrastructure (e.g. tying into road end stubs) this is not considered significant new infrastructure.</p>	<p>Major junction or other network improvements required.</p>	<p>Significant upgrading of junctions or other network improvements required</p>	<p>Minor improvements required but will enable significant new development where active travel and public transport will be possible</p>	<p>Minor improvements required but will enable significant new development where active travel and public transport will be prioritised</p>
<p>35. Will this proposal increase the need to travel by car, increasing carbon emissions and therefore exacerbating climate change? i.e. will it hinder the delivery of the modal hierarchy: 1. Walking 2. Cycling 3. Public Transport 4. Freight 5: Car share/taxi 6. Private Car</p>	<p>A proposal that is remote from (more than one) services and facilities (e.g. shops, schools, health services and places of work), or remote from its labour force where proposed use is employment could increase the need for travel by car and cannot therefore be considered sustainable. If a site is outwith the distance thresholds here, but is well served by public transport (frequent bus or rail services with at least half-hourly service throughout day at least 7am-10pm) it may not increase the need to travel by car.</p>	<p>The site is very remote (2km or more) from services and facilities and could create a significant increase in private car use</p> <p>The site, or access to it, has steep slopes, is elevated and on an exposed position that would be a significant deterrent to making an active travel choice</p>	<p>The site is somewhat remote (1-2 km) from services and facilities and could create an increase in private car use</p> <p>The site, or access to it, has some steep slopes and/or is exposed, reducing the attractiveness of active travel</p>	<p>Site is close to most services and facilities and is not steep to access nor exposed, making active travel a possible option</p>	<p>Site is close to almost all services and facilities and not steep to access nor exposed, making active travel a possible travel option</p>

<p>36. Will the development of the site impact on core paths and other active travel networks that could reduce the attractiveness of carbon neutral travel options (inc. pedestrian priority/desire lines)?</p>	<p>How will the site affect core paths or other access and path networks, such as long distance routes, cycle paths and rights of way. Will development sever, impede or adversely impact an existing route?</p>	<p>Development of site would have a significant adverse impact on existing active travel networks</p>	<p>Development of site would have a minor adverse impact on existing active travel networks</p>	<p>Proposal will result in minor enhancements of the active travel network</p>	<p>Proposal will result in major enhancements of the active travel network</p>
<p>37. Post-mitigation score</p>	<p>Taking all of the environmental questions into account, score, with mitigation identified, score the site against Sustainable Transport</p>	<p>Site would have a significant adverse impact on Sustainable Transport</p>	<p>Site would have a minor adverse impact on Sustainable Transport</p>	<p>Site would have a minor positive impact on Sustainable Transport</p>	<p>Site would have a significant positive impact on Sustainable Transport</p>

8 Sustainability of infrastructure

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
<p>38. Will primary and secondary schools experience capacity issues due to this proposal?</p>	<p>What are the school capacities and how many additional places will be created by this development. See School Roll Forecast Each house= 0.33 primary 0.13 secondary Each 2bed+ flat= 0.17 primary 0.07 secondary If assessing an allocated site, need to check HLA to see if site is already factored into school roll forecast.</p>	<p>School capacities are forecast or are already breached and/or will be significantly breached by this development and limited scope to address capacity issues caused</p>	<p>School capacities will be breached by this development and only limited scope to address capacity issues caused</p>	<p>Schools are under capacity and places are readily available and the site could help sustain it/them</p>	<p>Schools are significantly under capacity and site could help sustain it/them</p>

<p>39.</p> <p>Will the site use fossil fuel for heat and energy, therefore exacerbating the effects of climate change?</p> <p>i.e. is there no opportunity to be able to viably create or connect to a heat or energy network?</p>	<p>What opportunities does the proposal offer to deliver sustainable heat and energy? Key factors when considering viability are:</p> <p>Scale, density and use of development proposed (heat demand)</p> <p>Opportunities to connect to neighbouring land uses which may provide anchor loads or require a heat source. (heat demand/ supply)</p> <p>Expected length of pipework required to connect to or create a heat network. (infrastructure)</p>	<p>It will not be viable to develop or connect to a heat network. Site will be dependent on off-grid fossil fuel energy for some or all of its energy and heating needs.</p>	<p>It is unlikely to be viable to develop or connect to a heat network. There are no existing or proposed heat network or heat sources near the site. Viable connection to the existing mains gas network.</p>	<p>Site may provide an opportunity to develop a district heat network. Site is located close to an existing or proposed heat network, potential anchor load or heat source.</p>	<p>Site provides a good opportunity to develop a district heat network. Site is located adjacent to an existing or proposed heat network, potential anchor load or heat source.</p>
<p>40.</p> <p>Are there mains water and sewerage challenges for the site?</p>	<p>Check the GIS data. Scottish Water comments</p>	<p>No connection to water or sewerage possible</p>	<p>Connections are present but major upgrading of infrastructure are required to connect site</p>	<p>Allocating site would make a minor contribution to improving public water or sewerage infrastructure issues</p>	<p>Allocating site would make a major contribution to improving public water or sewerage infrastructure issues</p>
<p>41.</p> <p>Post-mitigation score</p>	<p>Taking all of the questions into account, score, with mitigation identified, score the site against Sustainability of infrastructure</p>	<p>Site would have a significant adverse impact on Sustainability of infrastructure</p>	<p>Site would have a minor adverse impact on Sustainability of infrastructure</p>	<p>Site would have a minor positive impact on Sustainability of infrastructure</p>	<p>Site would have a significant positive impact on Sustainability of infrastructure</p>

9 Placemaking

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
42. Will the development fail to deliver on all of the six qualities of successful places?	The six qualities of successful places are set out as: distinctive; safe and pleasant; easy to move around; welcoming; adaptable; and resource efficient	Proposal will not deliver on any of the six qualities	Proposal will not deliver on most of the six qualities	Proposal will deliver on most of the six qualities and with Developer Requirements can address those remaining	Proposal is of a quality to deliver all of the qualities and could be used as a Highland exemplar of placemaking
43. Will the proposal impact on the placemaking priorities for the settlement/area?	The site's/proposal's fit with the wider settlement.	Development would undermine key characteristics of the place and/or its placemaking priorities	Development would undermine some of the placemaking priorities	Development respects and would help deliver the placemaking priorities	Development would make a significant contribution to realising key placemaking priorities
44. Post-mitigation score	Taking all of the questions into account, score, with mitigation identified, score the site against Placemaking	Site would have a significant adverse impact on Placemaking	Site would have a minor adverse impact on Placemaking	Site would have a minor positive impact on Placemaking	Site would have a significant positive impact on Placemaking

10 Delivery

Question	Explanation	-- Significant negative	- Minor negative	+ Minor positive	++ Significant positive
45. Will developer contributions (financial commuted sums) be needed?	Use the Developer Contributions SG and Delivery Programme to consider likely contributions required.	Contributions over £7,000 per house. This may make the site unviable due to less incentive for the landowner to release the land, or impact on profit margin of developer.	£0 to £6,999	Development can be accommodated by existing infrastructure	Development will help to sustain existing facilities which are currently well under capacity
46. Are there abnormal costs that could impact the sites delivery (e.g. physical constraints, topography etc.)?	Are there major constraints to development (e.g. physical constraints, topography etc.) that would incur significant costs to rectify/ that would limit capacity of site to accommodate development	Major abnormal costs are present that could present significant physical or financial barriers to overcome	Some abnormal costs are present that could present some physical or financial barriers to overcome	No abnormal costs	Site preparation complete and service connections available at boundary
47. Are there any significant landownership issues which need to be overcome?	How will landownership impact delivery of the site- if a housebuilder is involved, this can be perceived as being positive	Major landownership issues, no evidence of developer involvement	Landownership issues which are likely to be resolved in the short term. There is uncertainty over the availability of the land for development, no evidence of developer involvement.	Developer involved in site. No ownership issues at present but there are multiple owners.	Developer involved in site. Site and access is owned by a single landowner/developer who is proactively looking to release/develop the land.
48. Post-mitigation score	Taking all of the socio-economic questions into account, score, with mitigation identified, score the site against Delivery	Site would have a significant adverse impact on Delivery	Site would have a minor adverse impact on Delivery	Site would have a minor positive impact on Delivery	Site would have a significant positive impact on Delivery