OUTER HEBRIDES LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Adopted Plan

A sustainable land use strategy for the Outer Hebrides

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
November 2012
# OUTER HEBRIDES LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**ADOPTED PLAN**

**FOREWORD**

**HOW TO USE THIS PLAN**

| 1 | INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT | 3 |
| 2 | VISION AND OBJECTIVES | 6 |
| 3 | DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY | 8 |
| 4 | DEVELOPMENT POLICIES | 13 |

Policy 1: Development Strategy  
Policy 2: Assessment of Development  
Policy 3: Zero and Low Carbon Buildings  
Policy 4: Siting and Design  
Policy 5: Landscape  
Policy 6: Water and Waste Water  
Policy 7: Flooding  
Policy 8: Waste Management  
Policy 9: Water Environment  
Policy 10: Soil Resources  
Policy 11: Compatibility of Neighbouring Uses  
Policy 12: Adverts and Signs  
Policy 13: Housing  
Policy 14: Caravans and Temporary Buildings  
Policy 15: Economic Development  
Policy 16: Newton Commercial Area  
Policy 17: Retail and Service Provision  
Policy 18: Stornoway Retail & Stornoway Town Centre Areas  
Policy 19: Energy Resources  
Policy 20: Small and Micro Renewables  
Policy 21: Minerals  
Policy 22: Fish Farming and Marine Planning  
Policy 23: Coastal Development and Erosion  
Policy 24: Countryside and Coastal Access
Foreword

I am pleased to present the adopted Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan. The Plan sets out the Comhairle’s land-use strategy to encourage and guide future development in our area over the next 20 years in a manner that respects the characteristics of the islands’ settlement patterns and has regard for the environment.

The promotion of sustainable economic development lies at the heart of our efforts to support strong thriving communities, and the Plan has a central role to play in the delivery of this. In the current economic climate we face a number of challenges in stimulating realistic economic growth, but a clear vision for land use provides a basis for future investment and decision-making and helps make the most of the opportunities available to us.

The Plan has a stronger spatial dimension than previous Development Plans with a focus on housing supply, infrastructure, and design quality in new developments. The Plan also seeks to address some of the challenges we face in the 21st century such as climate change, flooding, waste and energy use.

Consultation and engagement has been critical in the Plan’s preparation and its implementation will depend not just on the Comhairle, but crucially, other bodies, investors, communities, and individuals who all have an important part to play by using the Plan to inform their future development considerations.

The Plan can play an important role in helping to safeguard and sustain the Outer Hebrides - its people, character and qualities.

Councillor Archie K. Campbell
Chair of Sustainable Development Committee
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

November 2012
How to Use this Plan

Section 1, the Introduction, sets the context for the Plan and explains how it has been prepared.

Section 2, the Vision and Objectives, sets out a realistic aspiration for the Outer Hebrides over the next 20 years which the Plan has been structured to work towards achieving. All development proposals will be assessed for the extent to which they contribute to the achievement of the Plan’s vision and objectives.

Section 3, the Development Strategy, sets out the overall spatial strategy to guide development i.e., where development should and should not be located and the principles behind it. For example, in certain cases development may now be acceptable outwith settlements and the Development Strategy sets clear parameters for determining such proposals. The Development Strategy Policy applies to all proposals and should be taken into account for all proposed development.

Section 4, the Development Policies, sets out the requirements for different types of development and explains what uses are acceptable in different areas. There are 34 Policies (including the Development Strategy) supported by Supplementary Guidance (as listed in Appendix 2). Some policies apply to all development proposals, some are topic policies (applying to a certain type of development) and some are map based. Policies in the Plan are afforded equal weight in the determination of planning applications, so it is important to ensure that your proposal accords with all policies that are relevant to it. Compliance with one particular policy will not mean that a proposal is acceptable in terms of being in accordance with the Plan as a whole. In addition, a development proposal may also be affected by policy or legislation at National and/or European level.

Section 5, the Development Proposals, sets out the main proposals reasonably likely in the next five years. In considering, how these sites should be developed, proposals must comply with all relevant policies and Supplementary Guidance.

Section 6 indicates how Implementation and Monitoring of the plan will be addressed by the Comhairle. This section also discusses the proposed Action Programme, a document which sets out how the Comhairle proposes the Plan will be implemented.

Section 7 contains a set of Appendices which provides further guidance to assist the assessment of development proposals. Appendix 1 contains a summary of the Western Isles Landscape Character Assessment which is referred to in the Plan.
Appendix 2 contains a list of the **Supplementary Guidance** which will be adopted as part of this Plan.

Appendix 3 contains a **Schedule of Land** that is owned by the Comhairle and affected by policies, proposals or views expressed in the Plan.

Appendix 4 is a **Glossary** of key terms used within this document, along with a list of acronyms.

Section 8 **Maps**, identifies spatially areas of land affected by the policies and shows the detailed Development Proposal sites contained in Section 5 of the Plan. A Plan Area Context map and Development Strategy maps also accompany this document.
1. Introduction and Context

The Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan (referred to as ‘the Plan’) sets out a vision and spatial strategy for the development of land in the Outer Hebrides over the next 10-20 years. The Plan contains the land use planning policies which the Comhairle will use for determining planning applications. It also contains a number of development proposals for our settlements and rural areas.

When it is formally adopted in 2012, the Local Development Plan will replace the current Western Isles Structure Plan and Western Isles Local Plan, and will provide the planning framework for the whole of the Outer Hebrides. Until then, the Proposed Plan may be a material planning consideration. The Plan will be kept under review and will be replaced every 5 years.

This Plan is the outcome of research and engagement which has been undertaken since work started in 2009. A wide range of interested parties have been instrumental in shaping the Plan. A number of organisations including Scottish Natural Heritage; Historic Scotland; Scottish Water and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency have a particular role to play as the Key Agencies. These organisations have contributed throughout the process.

The Plan builds on the views expressed in response to the Main Issues Report (February 2010) which was a key stage in the consultation process. The Plan is also informed by the strategic policy direction and priorities of the Outer Hebrides Local Housing Strategy and Housing Need and Demand Assessment, Creating Communities of the Future, the Outer Hebrides Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement.

The Plan is consistent with the National Planning Framework 2 and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), and the Scottish Government Land Use Strategy and where relevant takes account of other national policy and legislation such as the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009; The Flood Risk Management Act 2009; Designing Places (2001); Designing Streets (2010); and the Scotland River Basin Management Plan 2009-15.
Several other documents have been produced in parallel with the Plan including the following:

- The **Action Programme**, which sets out how the Comhairle proposes the Plan will be implemented. It identifies the actions which will help implement the Plan; who is responsible for the delivery of these actions; and indicative timescales;

- The Comhairle has prepared five sets of **Supplementary Guidance** which will be adopted as part of this Development Plan. The Supplementary Guidance will have the same statutory basis as the Plan;

- The **Strategic Environmental Assessment Revised Environmental Report** which is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 (this document includes the Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the Local Development Plan);

- The **Outer Hebrides Housing Land Audit** which provides a comprehensive description of sites that may be suitable for housing within the Outer Hebrides as at 2011; and

- An **Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment** (Screening).
Context

The Outer Hebrides (or Western Isles) is an archipelago of over 70 named islands lying off the north-west coast of Scotland. The prevailing character is of a dispersed population in a predominantly rural landscape. Over 30% of the total population, nearly 8,000 people, live within the Greater Stornoway area with the remaining population scattered over 280 settlements in 11 inhabited islands.

The main sea-links from the islands are between Stornoway to Ullapool, Tarbert and Lochmaddy to Uig (Skye), and Lochboisdale and Castlebay to Oban and there are direct air links via Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness. These are complemented by important air and sea inter-island links.

Much of the economic and social activity is generated from within the islands but it relies heavily on connections with the mainland for essential supplies and export. The physical distance from its main markets place the islands at an inherent disadvantage and as a result, pressure for development is light, with the real challenges being how to sustain population levels and a diverse local economy.

Commercial and industrial development remains predominantly small scale. An increase in engineering and construction work in connection with anticipated energy development is a long term aspiration of the Comhairle. Tourism is a growth industry and much employment depends on visitors to the islands. The Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) scheme has been a major incentive to travel to the islands in recent years. The development of new physical or virtual trading links with the rest of the world will become increasingly important as the globalisation of markets continues.

It is estimated that over two thirds of the Outer Hebrides is in crofting tenure (approximately 6,000 crofts). Over the last 5 years, from April 2006 to March 2011, the total number of housing completions in the Outer Hebrides was 697 and over 70% of these consist of private house builds. Due to the current financial climate and the difficulties being faced, e.g., unemployment, access to mortgages, high build costs, it is anticipated that the next 5 year period may see a reduction in the number of private house completions. The Outer Hebrides continues to have the highest percentage of vacant dwellings and the second highest percentage of second homes in Scotland.

The Outer Hebrides is part of the Gaelic heartland, and has a rich cultural heritage with many exceptional archaeological sites and buildings of outstanding architectural and amenity value. The high quality environment hosts an array of internationally important species and habitat types, with a large percentage of land, inland waters and marine sites designated for nature conservation purposes. The landscape and natural heritage of the Outer Hebrides underpins significant industries such as food and drink, art, media and tourism and is a significant economic asset in itself, and for the wider economy.
2. Vision and Objectives

Reflecting on the needs and aspirations of stakeholders and community interests, the Plan sets out a broad vision of how the area could look in 10 - 20 years time.

National Aims

The National Planning Framework 2 indicates that the key spatial development aims for Scotland 2030 are: contributing to a Growing Economy; promoting a Greener Scotland; and building Stronger, Smarter, Healthier, and Safer Communities. Scottish Planning Policy indicates Plans should: facilitate sustainable development of the area, support increasing sustainable economic growth; contribute to high quality sustainable places; and protect and enhance environmental quality as an asset for that growth.

Local Aims

The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership is working to promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the people of the Outer Hebrides and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in Scotland. The Single Outcome Agreement for 2011-13 (SOA) between the Scottish Government and the Community Planning Partners sets out the priorities which will focus the delivery of better outcomes for the Outer Hebrides to meet the needs and aspirations of our communities. The SOA aims to create a prosperous well educated and healthy community enjoying a good quality of life and fully realising the benefits of the natural environment and the cultural traditions of the Outer Hebrides. The Plan has a key part to play in helping deliver land use development elements of the SOA for the Outer Hebrides. This will require the commitment and cooperation of a range of partners including Scottish Government, key agencies, developers, stakeholders and communities.
Drawing on the aims of the SOA, the ‘place making’ vision and objectives of the Local Development Plan are:

**Vision** 'To enable realistic economic growth and help facilitate strong thriving communities, the Plan will provide a sustainable land use strategy to accommodate development in a manner that respects the characteristics of the islands’ settlement patterns and has regard for the environment.'

**Objectives**

The vision aims to make our islands:

- **A good place to live** with a range of housing, supported by accessible services and facilities.
- **A successful place for working in** with a supportive planning framework, including well connected infrastructure to encourage long term economic regeneration and growth.
- **An attractive place** enjoyed by residents and visitors where our outstanding natural, built and cultural heritage is valued.
3. Development Strategy

The approach to development within the Outer Hebrides is based on a land use development strategy that aims to encourage and facilitate good quality development in appropriate locations in line with the Plan vision and objectives.

The context for consideration of development varies across the Outer Hebrides. Four area types have been identified for planning purposes. These are: Main Settlements; Rural Settlements; Outwith Settlements; and Remote Areas. Each of these has different characteristics and capacity for accommodating development and the Plan policies and proposals have been based on the Development Strategy. The Development Strategy Map shows the Main Settlements and the Remote Areas. A description of each area is set out below.

For planning purposes, a ‘settlement’ comprises a number of dwellings at least some of which are permanently inhabited and is defined by the main physical concentration of houses, related buildings, gardens, boundary enclosures and street furniture.

A. Main Settlements

Main settlements are identified as: Greater Stornoway; Tarbert; Lochmaddy; Balivanich; Lochboisdale & Daliburgh; and Greater Castlebay.

These settlements are the main entry points to the Outer Hebrides from the mainland and are home to 35% of the population. They have a strategic and local function supporting service, administrative, housing and community facilities. Some have a core area where retail activity is focussed. They provide employment infrastructure and public transport hubs and not only support the settlement itself but also play an important role in serving wider island needs.

Main settlements are generally more urban in appearance with higher density levels, however may have more dispersed ‘rural’ characteristics toward edges. There will be a focus on strategic development in these settlements and ensuring sufficient infrastructure capacity will be a priority.

Stornoway is the largest settlement in the Outer Hebrides and the main administrative and commercial centre. It has the largest concentration of population and greatest focus for development activity. Reflecting this focus of activity and in line with Scottish Planning Policy the following boundaries and areas for Stornoway are defined on the Settlement Strategy Map:

- Greater Stornoway Main Settlement boundary (Policy 1);
- Stornoway Settlement Core (Policy 13);
- Newton Commercial Area (Policy 16);
- Stornoway Town Centre Retail and Development Areas (Policy 18);
- Stornoway Conservation Area (Policy 32);
- Stornoway Archaeologically Sensitive Area (Policy 34).
B. Rural Settlements

Approx 64% of the population resides in rural settlements. Often shaped by historic or current crofting activity, these are primarily residential and agricultural areas. Rural settlements vary greatly in size and pattern with some very dispersed and others more concentrated, however overall the density of development tends to be much lower than in main settlements. Their function is mainly to serve local needs through provision of a range of local services including schools, community halls, small shops and post offices. While employment opportunities exist for tourism, crofting, and fisheries activities, principal employment tends to be in main settlements or working from home.

Within rural settlements the focus will be on accommodating development to meet sustainable growth for local needs, particularly for residential, tourism and service activities.

Sympathetic renovation of abandoned buildings will be encouraged within rural settlements provided that the proposal complies with relevant policies.

Areas of open land beyond the rural settlements are generally not considered to be included within this settlement type.
C. Outwith Settlements

Areas ‘outwith settlements’ generally have a more open landscape and dispersed development. They support non-residential uses, although housing may exist in such areas. Development proposals are likely to be resource-based infrastructure.

These areas encompass various landscape character types with machair, moorland and some upland landscapes. Often they serve as a separation between settlements that assists in retaining the distinctiveness of settlements. Areas outwith settlements have some local and strategic resource functions including roads, infrastructure associated with resource-based or tourism activities and recreation.

Such areas support a diverse range of development activities. The main land uses include agriculture as well as recreational or sporting activities. Certain business uses are also located here, such as quarries and storage/waste depots. Residential development tends to be single houses, often associated with management of a resource-based activity.

There is capacity for a limited amount of development; however, the design and siting of such development is critical to achieving a sympathetic fit with the surrounding landscape to avoid the development appearing out of place in its setting. A high quality of siting and design is required in these areas.

Sympathetic renovation of abandoned buildings may be acceptable outwith settlements provided that the proposal complies with relevant policies.

D. Remote Areas

Boundaries of Remote Areas (including isolated coastline and areas of wildland character) are shown on the Development Strategy Map. Although not marked as such, islands which are uninhabited, or not connected to an inhabited island by bridge or causeway, also fall within this category.

Remote Areas are largely undeveloped and important for their natural resources. They provide the backdrop setting for many settlements and include evidence of historic settlement, including abandoned crofting townships. However, no new houses have been built within Remote Areas for at least the last 5 years. The natural attributes of these areas provide an important economic asset for the local tourism economy and the sustainable development of natural resources.
POLICY 1: DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

All development proposals will be required to accord with the Development Strategy as well as other relevant Plan policies.

Development proposals within Main Settlements will be required to meet all of the following:

a) a siting and design appropriate to the characteristics of main settlements in line with Policy 4 Siting & Design;

b) accordance with density levels for housing as set out in Housing Policy 13;

c) where new development is to be sited on a greenfield site within the Stornoway Development Area in accordance with Policy 18, the developer must provide a justification for the development of the greenfield site in preference over a brownfield site;

d) retention of open space areas within the settlement for amenity and recreation purposes.

Development proposals within Rural Settlements will be assessed against all of the following:

a) a siting and design appropriate to the rural character, distinctiveness and settlement pattern of the local area in line with Siting & Design Policy 4 and Landscape Policy 5;

b) a lower level of density that accords with those set out in Housing Policy 13 and the landscape character of the individual settlement;

c) demonstration of how development at the edge of the settlement, physically and visually integrates with the existing settlement pattern and characteristics, and consolidates the existing edge;

d) new development does not erode the character which forms the distinctiveness of the rural settlement;

e) the development of better quality inbye croft land does not threaten the continuation of crofting.

Development proposals in Outwith Settlement areas will be assessed against all of the following:

a) a clearly justified and demonstrated need for the proposed development;

b) the capacity of the surrounding landscape to accommodate the development;

c) sensitive siting, scale and design to minimise impact on the open and rural character of the landscape, avoiding raised or high level locations to minimise visual impact; (supplementary information including siting, levels, height of proposed buildings and materials will be required at Planning Permission in Principle application stage as well as at detailed planning stage);
POLICY 1: DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (continued)

d) the design, materials and finish of the access and parking is appropriate to the rural setting and hard-landscaping is kept to a minimum;

e) the overall layout and design respects and, where possible, retains any archaeological, heritage or landscape features of the site.

Development proposals in Remote Areas will be limited. New residential uses will not be permitted and other uses will need to be clearly justified. Careful planning and design will be required to minimise environmental impacts. Only applications for detailed planning permission will be considered. Details of measures to maintain or enhance the area’s landscape attributes, including any wild land qualities will be required.

Supplementary guidance will be prepared in relation to both wind energy and fish farm proposals.

Proposals for development will only be acceptable where at least one of the following is met:

a) the development is required for reasons of over-riding public interest (including those of an economic or social nature);

b) a locational need has been demonstrated;

c) it is for, or associated with, the sustainable development of a natural resource;

d) it is for, or associated with, the sustainable development of fish farming in marine or freshwater environments.

Where any of the conditions above can be satisfied, proposals will be required to meet all the following criteria:

e) sensitive siting, design and scale of development to minimise impact on the open and rural character of the landscape and its qualities of remoteness;

f) no unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape character (including any wild land attributes); or natural heritage resource will result from the proposal.
4. Development Policies

Assessment of Development

This policy identifies a range of criteria relevant to the assessment of many development proposals. Consideration of the criteria and, where relevant to the proposal, submission of relevant information in support of a planning application, will enable efficient decision making. Compliance with one particular policy will not necessarily mean that a proposal is acceptable in terms of being in accordance with the Plan as a whole. The Comhairle will grant planning permission as a departure from the Development Plan only when material planning considerations clearly justify and in exceptional circumstances where the public benefit decisively outweighs any potential disadvantage.


POLICY 2: ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Underpinning each of the policies in the Plan is a requirement to demonstrate that development proposals:

a) will not significantly adversely affect biodiversity and ecological interests and, where possible, result in an enhancement of these interests (The online Biodiversity Planning Toolkit should be consulted for general advice and good practice on habitats and species, and the NBN Gateway for site specific biodiversity data);

b) will not result in pollution or discharges outwith prescribed limits to the air, land, freshwater or sea;

c) have been designed to take account of the requirements of safeguarding zones notified by the Health and Safety Executive, Civil Aviation Authority, National Air Traffic Services, Ministry of Defence, Marine Consultation Areas, relevant Harbour Authorities and Marine Protected Areas.

All development will be assessed for its impacts individually, incrementally and cumulatively to ensure no significant detrimental effects arise.

The Comhairle may negotiate with developers a fair and reasonable contribution towards infrastructure and/or services required as a consequence of the proposed development. The contributions will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development (including cumulative) and will be addressed through planning conditions or through a legal agreement if appropriate.
Climate Change

Climate change is a significant issue and Planning has a role in seeking to address this. Legislation states that all local authorities in their Local Development Plans must seek to reduce carbon emissions and seek the use of low and zero carbon generating technologies in all new building developments. This will contribute to meeting Building Standards Energy and Sustainability requirements and Scottish Government’s CO₂ emission reduction targets.

The principle of sustainability is already embedded within Planning and Building Standards, however, this has been further strengthened through the concept of Sustainability Labelling which aims to reward the achievement of either meeting or exceeding Building Standards and opting to meet higher levels in terms of energy and carbon emissions targets as well as water efficiency and flexibility in design.

References: Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009; Scottish Building Standards Handbooks; Sustainability Labelling; Building (Scotland) Act 2003.

POLICY 3: ZERO AND LOW CARBON BUILDINGS

Low and/or zero carbon generating technology must be installed in all new buildings (with the exception of those listed below) to reduce predicted carbon dioxide emissions from buildings to meet the minimum building standards.

A sustainability statement detailing the technologies proposed and demonstrating proposed achievement of Bronze Active Sustainability rating (achieving or exceeding Building Standards), must be submitted as part of planning applications for new buildings.

This requirement does not apply to any of the following:

   a) buildings which will not be heated or cooled, other than by heating provided solely for the purpose of frost protection;
   b) alterations and extensions to buildings;
   c) changes of use or conversion of buildings;
   d) ancillary buildings that are stand-alone, having an area less than 50 square metres;
   e) buildings which are designed so that the energy necessary is integral to the structure requiring minimal additional mechanisation (the passive house concept);
   f) buildings which have an intended life of less than two years.
Siting and Design

Well sited and designed proposals ensure good quality development that fits into its surroundings. The siting and design of development is important in contributing to the quality of the environment within which we live and work and also as a practical means of achieving a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals, making places that can be successful and sustainable. There are a number of siting and design factors that combine to shape a new development and these form the basis of the policy.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 78 – 85 & 95; Policy Statement for Scotland - Designing Places; PAN 67 Housing Quality; PAN 68 Design Statements; PAN 72 Housing in the Countryside; PAN 76 New Residential Streets; the Outer Hebrides Design Guide.

POLICY 4: SITING AND DESIGN

Development proposals must demonstrate a satisfactory quality of siting, scale and design that respects and reflects the characteristics of the surroundings.

Development proposals for buildings will be permitted where they satisfy all of the following:

a) siting relates to the settlement pattern, landform, surrounding buildings and open spaces, and accords with Policy 1 Development Strategy and Policy 5 Landscape;

b) design, scale, form and mass integrate with the streetscape, townscape and/or landform, avoid dominating the skyline, and relate to design elements that make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area; the mass of larger buildings should be managed by breaking up the design elements;

c) materials, colour, proportions and detailing complement the streetscape, townscape and/or landscape;

d) car parking arrangements accord with the Standards for Car Parking and Roads Layout Supplementary Guidance which forms part of the Development Plan;

e) plot layout accommodates:
   i. the development footprint placed and orientated to respect the characteristics of the local area;
   ii. service requirements, safe road access, parking provision integrated to minimise adverse impacts on the environment and public road;
   iii. adequate amenity space consistent with the type and character of the development;
   iv. landscaping, and boundary treatments in positions, form and scale that integrate the development into its setting.

Developments which result in an over-development of a plot or site by virtue of density, scale, or height will be resisted;
f) Levels, excavation and under-building – buildings on sloping sites should be set at a level which will achieve a balance between excavation depth and levels of visible under-build. Surplus materials from excavations should be landscaped to reflect the natural landform. Pre and post development levels and landscaping measures should be detailed on submitted plans;

g) The amenity of neighbouring properties is considered in the siting and design of new development to ensure reasonable levels of amenity are retained in respect of noise, disturbance or lighting, overlooking and overshadowing. Development will not be supported where it will result in a significant impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

**Housing Development on the Edge of Settlements** Housing development proposed on the edge of settlements will only be acceptable where the landscape can absorb an extension to the settlement and/or it consolidates the existing settlement edge. Development that significantly harms the landscape and/or visual setting of the settlement will be resisted.

**Infill Development** The scale and design of infill development proposals should take account of a settlement’s existing built character and historic development pattern. Details regarding the upgrading of mutual accesses should accord with the Standards for Car Parking and Roads Layout Supplementary Guidance where appropriate. Applications for Detailed Planning Permission should include details that clearly indicate the siting and height of the proposed building(s) in relation to the neighbouring buildings.

**Large Scale Developments** Proposals for groups of four or more houses, or large scale non housing developments, should demonstrate all of the following:

h) the area has capacity to absorb a large scale development, particularly outwith the main settlements;

i) a quality environment will be provided for the residents of both the proposed new housing and surrounding areas;

j) the proposed development satisfactorily meets the requirements of policies on infrastructure and landscape.

Depending on the scale of development a phasing schedule may be required to ensure a coordinated overall development.

The incorporation of an element of art or interpretation material into larger scale developments may be sought for new public or landmark buildings. These or related aspects may be dealt with as necessary by developer contribution (e.g., planning agreement or by planning condition).
POLICY 4: SITING AND DESIGN (continued)

Alterations and Extensions Proposals should be appropriate in terms of the design, scale, form and materials in relation to the original existing building and neighbouring properties, and no significant detrimental impact on the appearance of the original existing building or the character and amenity of the surrounding area should arise as a result of the development.

Agricultural Buildings New agricultural buildings in a National Scenic Area will be required to be of a high quality design and their siting appropriate to their landscape setting. When locating agricultural buildings consideration should be given to the local topography and the scale and colour of the building. Sites on the skyline should be avoided, natural contours should be used to marry the building into the landscape and in most cases dark/natural matt colours will be most appropriate. Landscaping and or screen/planting may be required to minimise visual intrusion and aid absorption of buildings into the landscape.
Landscape

The landscapes of the Outer Hebrides are a valuable resource for our island communities, shaping the distinctiveness and identity of place, the cultural heritage and the quality of people’s everyday lives. Encompassing some of Scotland’s most scenic images, they are a unique asset and offer a competitive advantage in an international market place. As a critical element of the ‘tourism product’ they underpin a growth industry for the islands and the contribution they make to the wider economy is being increasingly recognised and valued. The Plan has a key role to play in managing change in the landscape whilst maintaining and enhancing distinctive character landscapes. By integrating landscape considerations with wider economic development aspirations, the Plan can proactively support development that will contribute to sustainable economic growth.

Over 40% of the area of the islands is designated National Scenic Area, confirming the national significance of the landscape. These are: South Lewis, Harris and North Uist; South Uist Machair; and St Kilda. The Islands also have one Historic Garden and Designed Landscape designation in the Lews Castle Grounds.

As different landscapes have a different capacity to accommodate new development, the siting and design of new development should be informed by local landscape character. The Landscape Character Assessment of the Western Isles identifies eleven major landscape character types within the islands, including some that are rare in Scotland or particularly unique and distinctive to the Outer Hebrides. Peat bog is the most common habitat in the islands, forming characteristic smooth blanket bogs studded with numerous water bodies. At higher altitudes, the peatlands give way to montane areas which support a limited range of plants and animal species. On the west side of the islands lie the flat and fertile coastal plains known as ‘machair’. The machair habitat of the Outer Hebrides is considered a ‘rare’ type in terms of the biodiversity it sustains. The Outer Hebrides also includes areas of wild land character and has some of the best resource of this type in Britain.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 125-128; PAN 60 & 44; Western Isles Landscape Character Assessment (1997) (WI LCA); SNH Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas (2010).
POLICY 5: LANDSCAPE

Development proposals should relate to the specific landscape and visual characteristics of the local area, ensuring that the overall integrity of landscape character is maintained.

The Western Isles Landscape Character Assessment (WI-LCA) will be taken into account in determining applications and developers should refer to Appendix 1 of this plan for a summary of this guidance.

Development proposals in National Scenic Areas should satisfy the appropriate tests in Policy 28 Natural Heritage. Landscapes with the special qualities of ‘wild land character’ currently fall within the Remote Area classification of Policy 1 Development Strategy.
**Water and Waste Water**

Good quality infrastructure is important not only to serve new development but also to protect the environment. The Comhairle will support Scottish Water in pursuing investment in areas of limited capacity to ensure sufficient capacity for development potential within the Plan period. In an area where capacity is currently deemed limited, prospective developers should liaise with Scottish Water as early as possible in their planning process to ensure adequate supporting documentation is compiled to assist with any subsequent investment projects and phasing of connections. Where appropriate, developers will be required to make a contribution to ensure adequate network capacity is in place.


**POLICY 6: WATER AND WASTE WATER**

New developments will be required to adopt the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) with the exception of those discharging directly to coastal waters and single house developments (where surface water can be treated by other means).

Sewerage: - New buildings in areas with public sewerage systems and developments of 25 houses or more will be required to connect to the public sewer unless the developer can demonstrate that there are specific technical reasons as to why the development cannot reasonably be connected to a public sewer. In such cases the development will only be permitted if the developer can demonstrate a sustainable, alternative method that will not significantly adversely impact on the environment or neighbour amenity.

Private waste water systems should discharge to land. Where this is not possible, the developer must submit evidence that discharge to the water environment is acceptable to SEPA. Discharge from waste water systems direct to waters designated under EC Shellfish Directives will not be permitted.

Water: - New developments in areas with public water supplies will be required to connect to the public water supply. In situations where there is no, or an inadequate, public water supply the details including the sufficiency and wholesomeness of the private water supply will require to be demonstrated.
Flooding

The Outer Hebrides has a range of low-lying areas of land potentially at risk of flooding, from the sea and/or potentially other sources, e.g., fluvial (water course), pluvial (surface water), groundwater or blocked culverts. The risk of flooding from all sources is likely to increase with projected climate change. The likelihood of a site being flooded is measured in terms of probabilities per annum, which range from very low (0.1% [1:1000]) low to medium (0.1 – 0.5% [1:1000 – 1:200]) to medium to high (greater than 0.5% [1:200]) probability of flooding in any year. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) provides a Risk Framework which divides flood risk into 3 categories and outlines an appropriate planning response. The policy approach aims to minimise any potential risk that might arise from a flood event.

The Comhairle will produce a Surface Water Management Plan as part of its responsibilities under the Flood Risk Management Act.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 196 - 211; PAN 69; SEPA Policy No 22 (Flood Risk Assessment Strategy); SEPA Policy No 41 (Development at Risk of Flooding: Advice and Consultation); SEPA’s Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map (Scotland); Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009; SEPA’s planning flood risk page; SEPA Interim Position Statement on Planning & Flooding 2009.
POLICY 7: FLOODING

The following approach will be adopted for proposals within areas at risk of flooding:

a) Areas of low to medium risk: These areas will be suitable for most development with the exception of essential civil infrastructure such as hospitals, fire stations, emergency depots etc. A flood risk assessment may be required at the discretion of the Comhairle.

b) For developments proposed within areas identified on the indicative flood risk maps published by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency as being at medium or high flood risk, developers will be required to provide a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) undertaken to a competent standard, or other suitable information that demonstrates compliance with Scottish Planning policy.

c) Areas bordering areas of medium – high flood risk: a topographical survey (or a minimum of 5 spot levels referenced to Ordnance Datum) may be required to inform the need or otherwise for a FRA.

The FRA will require to:

a) assess the level of risk of flooding arising from the proposed development and;

b) demonstrate that the proposed development is compatible with the risk of flooding and;

c) include acceptable measures to mitigate against the potential effects of flooding on and off the site arising from the proposal and;

d) demonstrate that the proposal will not add to the area of a Flood Prevention Scheme.

Where it can be demonstrated that the location is essential for operational reasons, e.g., harbours, piers, offshore energy and fisheries related activities, development proposals will be allowed in flood risk areas subject to sustainable flood management measures being incorporated at design stage that mitigate against flood risk.

In line with national policy, flood risk assessments and studies will be used in determining the acceptability of the site and the proposed development, as well as any future flood risk implications arising from the development. Where the risk of flooding is deemed unacceptable the proposal will not be permitted. Where flood management measures are required, natural devices such as wetlands should be incorporated or developers should provide a justification as to why they are impracticable.
Waste Management

A national Zero Waste Plan (ZWP) will move away from waste to landfill, concentrating on sustainable waste management. The ZWP will prioritise the management of resources as high up the Waste Hierarchy (i.e., prevention; re-use; recycle; recovery and disposal) as possible. The vision of the ZWP is of a Scotland where resource use is minimised; where the resource is maximised from waste; waste is sorted into separate streams for reprocessing; only limited types of waste to go to residual waste treatment, including energy from waste; and landfill is seen only as a final disposal option. In the future the ZWP expects the principles of the Waste Hierarchy to be employed particularly in new developments. In bringing forward proposals developers should consider how waste can be minimised on-site, for instance through the reuse of materials and how Site Waste Management Plans could assist that process.

POLICY 8: WASTE MANAGEMENT

The primary waste management and recycling sites which will be safeguarded to meet the current needs of the Outer Hebrides and for the location of additional waste management facilities are Bennadrove, Stornoway; Creed Park Recycling, Lochs Road, Lewis; and Rueval, Benbecula.

The opportunity to develop new waste management sites should be considered in conjunction with the development and/or reinstatement of mineral extraction sites and sites suitable for a range of industrial, business and employment activities. New sites for, or incorporating, waste management facilities will require to meet all the following criteria:

a) the landscape and visual impact is acceptable;

b) details of on-site management arrangements are submitted as part of any planning application and deemed acceptable;

c) the programme of restoration, including end use, is submitted as part of any planning application and deemed acceptable;

d) the proposal accords with the Zero Waste Plan 2010.

Waste management and recycling facilities must be designed and built into all new industrial, commercial, retail and communal housing development proposals both during the construction phase as well as the completed development.

Preparation of a Site Waste Management Plan will be required to accompany proposals for large scale developments such as new wind farms sites; industrial sites; housing sites of 15 or more units and new public buildings including schools and residential institutions. For all other developments, waste will be managed in accordance with the Waste Hierarchy. Details of how waste is to be managed should be provided as part of the sustainability statement required through Policy 3 Low and Zero Carbon Buildings.

In line with the Zero Waste Plan the Comhairle will work towards reducing waste to landfill to 5% or less by 2025. This will be done by increasing diversion from landfill; by recycling and developing alternative waste processing options; by maximising opportunities for local recovery options wherever environmentally and economically feasible; and by seeking to increase opportunities for biomass.
**Water Environment**

The Comhairle has a duty as a responsible authority under the Water Framework Directive to protect and, where possible, improve the Outer Hebrides water environment. A key objective of the Scotland River Basin Management Plan and the West Highland Area Management Plan is that water bodies achieve good ecological status/potential, and that there is no deterioration in current ecological status/potential. This involves the protection of the water environment (including rivers, lochs, transitional [estuaries], burns, ponds, wetlands, standing, tidal or coastal waters and ground waters) and water dependant protected areas from inappropriate development, and improving the water environment where possible. Improvements to the water environment can contribute to flood risk management objectives. The creation of riparian habitats for mammals, birds, insects and other aquatic species, will also contribute to meeting the objectives of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

POLICY 9: WATER ENVIRONMENT

Development proposals should avoid adverse impact on the water environment. All proposals involving activities in or adjacent to any water body must be accompanied by sufficient information to enable a full assessment to be made of the likely effects, including environmental effects, of the development.

Where a proposal has potential to adversely impact on the water environment then all the following must be demonstrated:

a) no deterioration in ecological status/potential will result and, for any water body not currently achieving good ecological status/potential, the development will either seek to improve the water body status or not prevent it from being able to achieve good ecological status in the future;

b) it contributes to the objectives and targets within the Scotland River Basin Management Plan and the supplementary West Highland Area Management Plan;

c) the creation, enhancement and/or management of existing and new habitats such as the provision of appropriate development buffer strips, natural flood management within flood plains, control of invasive non-native species or improvements to fish passage;

d) no significant effect both during construction and after completion on:
   - water quality in adjacent watercourses or areas downstream;
   - water quantity and natural flow patterns and sediment transport processes in all water bodies.

Where any water body is located within or bordering a proposed development, a development buffer strip should be incorporated between the water body and the proposed development, which can be accessed and maintained all year round. The requirement for a buffer strip would not apply to development proposals for quays, piers or jetties.
Soils and Peat

The disturbance of some soils, particularly peat, may lead to the release of stored carbon, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. The Scottish Soil Framework promotes the sustainable management and protection of soils consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs of Scotland. The most significant pressures on soil are climate change and the loss of soil organic matter through disturbance. Scottish Planning Policy requires that planning decisions take account of the implications of development for soil quality generally. While the conservation of peat is important for nature conservation, archaeological interests and for the role it plays as a carbon sink, by necessity, much construction in the Outer Hebrides occurs on peat. Developers will be asked to refer to SEPA guidance on developments on peat in drawing up plans.


POLICY 10: SOIL RESOURCES

Where peat and other carbon rich soils are present, developers should assess the likely effects associated with any development work and aim to mitigate any adverse impacts arising.

For Major developments, minerals and large scale (over 20MW) renewable energy proposals, development will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that unnecessary disturbance of soils, peat and any associated vegetation is avoided. Evidence of the adoption of best practice in the movement, storage, management and reinstatement of soils must be submitted along with any planning application.

Major developments, minerals and large scale renewable energy proposals on undisturbed areas of deep peat* will only be permitted for these uses where:

a) the economic, social and/or environmental benefits of the proposal outweigh any potential detrimental effect on the environment; and

b) it has been clearly demonstrated that there is no viable alternative.

Where development on undisturbed peat is deemed acceptable, a peat depth survey must be submitted which demonstrates that the areas of deepest peat have been avoided. Where required, a peat management plan must also be submitted which demonstrates that unnecessary disturbance, degradation or erosion of peat is avoided.

Large scale commercial peat extraction will not be permitted.

*deep peat is defined as 2m or more.
Neighbouring Uses

Existing industrial, business and other commercial activities have an important role to play in contributing to economic development. It is necessary to ensure that new uses are compatible with existing uses to ensure that both the current and the proposed use can operate alongside each other.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 3, 4, 26 & 45.

POLICY 11: COMPATIBILITY OF NEIGHBOURING USES

Development proposals adjacent to: existing or consented general industrial/storage sites (use classes 5 & 6); mineral extraction or waste management sites; LDP Economic Proposal sites; non-residential caravan sites; and renewable energy development should not constrain these existing or consented uses.

This may be achieved either through creation of a buffer zone between the uses or by the use of other design and landscaping techniques.

New development proposals must:

a) minimise any adverse impact on the amenity of adjacent uses to an acceptable level; and/or

b) make provision to enable re-location of a non compatible use to a more appropriate site in the case of larger scale developments.
Advertisements

Advertisements while important in terms of identifying services and providing direction can, if poorly managed, result in visual clutter on roads and at junctions adversely impacting on road safety, visual and neighbour amenity. Advertisements require to be maintained in a clean, tidy and safe condition.

References: Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984.

**POLICY 12: ADVERTS AND SIGNS**

Applications for advertisements and signs, and particularly those with proposed illumination, and/or affecting the setting of a listed building, must be of a suitable design, dimension, position, material and colour so that they:

a) are appropriate to their surroundings in scale, character and materials and do not adversely affect architectural detail; and

b) avoid creating clutter and do not detract from the amenity of the area or interrupt important features, buildings or views; and

c) do not prejudice public safety, highway safety or visibility of official signs.

The cumulative impact of additional signs will be a factor in assessing proposals and developers will be encouraged to make use of composite signs where appropriate. The requirements for signage within Conservation Areas are set out in the Conservation Area Management Plans Supplementary Guidance.
Housing

Housing is a key development activity on the islands. It is important to help ensure there is sufficient land available for future provision as determined through the Housing Need and Demand Assessment. The housing completion figures show 697 houses were completed in the past 5 years. Over 70% of housing development occurs on private/individual windfall sites and this will continue to be a significant component. Identification of proposal sites helps address the demand particularly to ensure the provision of affordable housing and ensure a mix of tenure in the development of larger sites. The allocations (shown on the Proposal Site Maps) provide a generous supply of land to meet the demand in accordance with national policy and the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). Over the last five years the private rented housing market, which includes Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), has contributed to the area’s housing stock. HMOs can help to support economic growth of the area particularly where there are large scale short term projects.


POLICY 13: HOUSING

The effective land supply to deliver the housing needs of the islands for at least a five year period (as identified in the Local Housing Strategy Housing Need and Demand Assessment) will be delivered through individual/private sites and those listed in Proposal H1. Proposal H1 sites will be safeguarded against uses and development that would compromise the residential function of the site. To meet any shortfall and provide for longer term supply a further range of sites are listed in Proposal H2.

In addition to the identified sites, housing development may be permitted where the development:

- comprises redevelopment of land or premises; or,
- is a conversion of an existing property; or,
- is for use of derelict land or gap sites; or,
- is of small scale (not more than 3 dwellings) at an appropriate density; or,
- it is appropriately located within the Rural housing market area.

Housing proposals should not be located adjacent to: existing or consented general industrial/storage sites (use classes 5 & 6); mineral extraction or waste management sites; LDP Economic Proposal sites; non-residential caravan sites; and renewable energy development, where the residential amenity would be compromised.
POLICY 13: HOUSING (continued)

For housing proposals of:

a) 4 or more units, an appropriate housing density will be required as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing density by area (see Policy 1)</th>
<th>Maximum density</th>
<th>Minimum density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stornoway core</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>25 units/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outwith the core &amp; in other main settlements</td>
<td>30 units/ha</td>
<td>15 units/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within rural settlements</td>
<td>20 units/ha</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outwith settlements</td>
<td>15 units/ha</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) 8 or more units, a minimum of 25% affordable housing will be required unless otherwise determined in a planning brief;

c) 15 units or more, an appropriate tenure mix will be sought in discussion with the developer.

A planning application which does not accord with the above will not be acceptable unless it is demonstrated that there is a need for housing in the area, or the site specific development issues, combined with the overriding public benefit of the development of the site, would justify the proposal.

Planning briefs will be prepared by the Comhairle as statutory Supplementary Guidance for specific housing sites as indicated in the Proposals section of the Plan.

Planning permission will be required for multiple occupation of a house by five or more unrelated people and occupation of a flat by three or more unrelated people, if it is deemed a material change of use. Proposals for the conversion and sub division of buildings into multiple residential units will be assessed on the contribution the development could make to meeting housing demand balanced against any possible damage to the character and amenity of the area and of adjoining dwellings.
Caravans and Temporary Buildings

Caravans in the Outer Hebrides are used not only to provide holiday accommodation but often for residential use as a stop gap measure during construction of a new house or for small scale business accommodation. The exposure and climate of the Outer Hebrides is such that these structures are not suitable for long term use, particularly as residential accommodation, and problems can arise with end of life disposal when they fall into disrepair.

The Comhairle’s policy on the siting of caravans, associated facilities and temporary buildings for residential or holiday use and on the use of temporary premises, particularly for business or retail uses, is set out in Supplementary Guidance. The policy aims to address and mitigate against adverse environmental and amenity issues arising from such uses and ensure that such structures are dealt with appropriately at their natural end of life.


POLICY 14: CARAVANS AND TEMPORARY BUILDINGS

Proposals must avoid any adverse environmental and amenity issues arising from development and demonstrate solutions for the end of the life for these structures. Proposals will be assessed against relevant policies in the Plan and in particular must comply with the policies contained in the Supplementary Guidance for Caravans and Temporary Buildings which forms part of the Development Plan.
Economic Development

Growth in economic activity and the creation of employment opportunities are key elements in addressing population decline for the Outer Hebrides. Within an area where the Gross Domestic Product is significantly lower than the national average, a flexible approach to attracting and accommodating new and expanding business is essential. The Plan has a key role to play in ensuring sufficient land is identified to accommodate a range of economic activities. The quality and value of the natural, built, and cultural heritage of the islands contributes towards the Outer Hebrides economy. These assets can be utilised in a manner to ensure sustainable economic benefit.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 4 - 51; Creating Communities of the Future 2002; National Planning Framework 2; PAN 73.

POLICY 15: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The preferred locations identified as the main sites to deliver the strategic business needs of the islands are listed in Proposal E1. These locations will be safeguarded against uses or development that would compromise the business function of the site.

Further sites also suitable for a range of commercial developments are listed in Proposal E2.

Proposals for economic development outwith these sites may be permitted if it can be demonstrated that none of the sites identified in Proposals E1 and E2 is suitable to accommodate the proposed development, or there is specific economic need at the proposed location.

Sites to be upgraded or developed for accommodating holiday/touring caravans will be required to accord with Policy 14 Caravans and Temporary Buildings and the associated Supplementary Guidance.

For large sites details of proposed phasing, infrastructure and other relevant matters may be required in support of the planning application. The provision of waste management facilities will be required in accordance with Policy 8 Waste Management.
Newton Area, Stornoway

The Newton area is the historical industrial area of Stornoway. Over time some degree of regeneration has taken place however the area is partially constrained by the Health and Safety Executive safeguarding zones around the gas storage tanks that serve Stornoway. Some areas of Newton may be at risk of flooding and Policy 7 Flooding will apply to new proposals for these areas.

References: PAN 52; Stornoway Regeneration Action Plan.

POLICY 16: NEWTON COMMERCIAL AREA

Development within the Newton Commercial Area (defined on the Development Strategy Map) will be for business, retail, financial, professional and other services. Proposals must meet all of the following criteria:

a) constitutes an improvement in the quality of the environment of the area;

b) does not result in congestion problems arising from on-street vehicle parking;

c) takes account of requirements for safeguarding zones notified by the Health and Safety Executive.

On sites adjacent to Sandwick Road, the design and landscaping should be of a quality that complements the prominent location on a key approach to Stornoway.
Retail and Service Provision

The retail and service sectors provide a significant contribution to local employment. Given its size and status as the primary administrative centre, Stornoway is the main retail and service centre within Lewis and Harris. The dispersed geographic nature of the islands requires a more local approach to retail provision, particularly in the rural areas.


POLICY 17: RETAIL AND SERVICE PROVISION

Proposals for retail, commercial and public uses will be supported where it is demonstrated that they contribute to the enhancement and provision of local shops, post offices and other customer services in existing settlements.

Proposals resulting in the loss of key retail and service facilities (e.g., change of use application affecting ‘single’ township shops) may only be approved where it has been demonstrated that it will not threaten to undermine the viability of the local community and:

a) every effort has been made to market the property/business as a going concern; or

b) the proposal is part of a wider redevelopment which will add to the vitality of the settlement.

The sale of goods from commercial premises (e.g., builders), from aquaculture/fishing businesses; or agricultural produce from crofts will normally be allowed without a specific need for planning consent provided it is ancillary to the main business.

Where they help promote rural diversification, smaller scale retail developments (max 100sq.m) for example relating to croft diversification or tourist related development, will be acceptable where they meet the requirements of the Development Strategy. Temporary buildings will require to accord with the Caravans and Temporary Buildings Supplementary Guidance.

Occasional retail sales from hotels and other non-retail locations should not cause undue parking, road safety or amenity problems.
Stornoway Town Centre

The ongoing regeneration of Stornoway is a key policy objective of local public agencies who are working together to enhance the vitality, viability and vibrancy of Stornoway through regeneration of the environment of the town and its surrounding area. In line with Scottish Planning Policy, initiatives or proposals that facilitate a successful and attractive town centre with a mix of uses including retail, commercial, recreational, cultural and community facilities as well as residential are to be welcomed. The physical changes focus on the needs of people, our built heritage and business development with a focus on quality of development. The economic contribution of business, commercial and administrative uses which lie outwith the designated Town Centre are also recognised in contributing to the town’s retail and service centre functions.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 52 - 65; PAN 59, PAN 52; Stornoway Regeneration Action Plan.
**POLICY 18: STORNOWAY RETAIL & STORNOWAY TOWN CENTRE AREAS**

In Stornoway Town Centre Retail Area, as defined on the Development Strategy Map and in line with Policy 1 Development Strategy, uses should contribute positively to the vitality and viability of the town centre as a primary focus for pedestrian and retail commercial activity. Uses that would undermine the viability of the retail function will not be acceptable.

Ground floor uses should fall within Use Classes 1, 2 and 3. In addition, the use of upper floorspace for residential purposes will also be acceptable. Development proposals within the Town Centre Retail Area will be assessed to:

- a) ensure the design fits within the overall street frontage;
- b) minimise the impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses;
- c) ensure that the storage and servicing requirements of the development are adequate;
- d) promote environments which enhance community safety and reduce the fear of crime;
- e) ensure the development accords with the Stornoway Conservation Area Management Plan.

Retail proposals for Greater Stornoway should be located within the Town Centre Retail Area or on sites allocated in this Plan for that purpose. In line with Scottish Planning Policy sequential locational test, where no suitable site is available within the Town Centre Retail Area, sites should then be sought within the wider Stornoway Town Centre Development Area.

For proposals outwith the Town Centre Retail Area the developer will be expected to demonstrate all of the following:

- f) development of the scale proposed is appropriate to the local setting;
- g) site accessibility and parking is satisfactory including adequacy of public transport provisions;
- h) no significant adverse impact on vitality/viability of existing Town Centre Retail Area.

The developer may be requested to provide an assessment (including a retail impact assessment for developments over 2,500sq.m) to support a development proposal.
POLICY 18: STORNOWAY RETAIL & STORNOWAY TOWN CENTRE AREAS (continued)

Shops located and designed to primarily serve local needs, including residential areas, are exempt from the sequential test requirement but may require a Retail Impact Assessment at the request of the Comhairle.

In the wider Stornoway Town Centre Development Area, as defined on the Development Strategy Map, a range of investment and regeneration activities may be appropriate where criteria f) to h) above can be met. These may include a range of functions such as commercial, residential, marine or harbour related activities.

For proposals within the Newton Commercial Area, Policy 16 will apply.
Energy Resources

The Comhairle wishes to capitalise on the significant renewable energy generation potential in and around the Outer Hebrides, e.g., wind and wave resources. There is already an established manufacturing base in the fabrication of energy equipment, and the Outer Hebrides has the potential to service and support further onshore and offshore activities. Equally the islands could seek to expand energy from other sources including energy from waste and to a lesser degree biomass.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 182-195 & 236-238; National Planning Framework 2; Web based replacement advice to PAN 45 Renewable Energy Technologies and Annex 2 Spatial Frameworks and Supplementary Planning Guidance for Wind Farms; Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009; National Renewables Infrastructure Plan; Climate Change Delivery Plan; SEPA’s Thermal Treatment of Waste Guidelines; SEPA LUPS GU4 Planning Guidance on Windfarm Developments; SEPA LUPS GU18 Planning Guidance on Hydropower Developments; SEPA, SNH, Scottish Renewables and Forestry Commission Scotland have produced Good practice during windfarm construction (2010).

POLICY 19: ENERGY RESOURCES

The Comhairle will support proposals that contribute to meeting the targets and objectives of the National Planning Framework 2, the Climate Change Act, and the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan in relation to electricity grid reinforcement, infrastructure and renewable energy generation.

Proposals for onshore renewable energy projects and oil and gas operations (including extensions to existing or proposed developments and land based infrastructure associated with offshore projects) will be assessed against the details below and be required to demonstrate all the following:

a) appropriate location, siting and design including the technical rationale for the choice of site;

b) no unacceptable adverse impact (including cumulative) on: landscape, townscape and visual aspects; natural, built and cultural heritage resources; the water environment; peatlands; aviation, defence and telecommunications transmitting and receiving systems, e.g., broadband; public health and safety, and amenity (including noise and shadow flicker as appropriate); neighbouring land uses, transport management and core paths;

c) acceptable decommissioning and site reinstatement arrangements;

d) phasing arrangements, where appropriate;

e) the contribution towards meeting national energy supply targets and local economic impact.
POLICY 19: ENERGY RESOURCES (continued)

Supplementary guidance will be prepared for Wind Energy Development.

The type, scale and size of the proposed development will have a significant effect on the way the Comhairle will consider an application and the level of accompanying information that will be required. Conditions and, where necessary, a planning agreement may be used to control the detail of the development. Non-permanent elements of a development will be granted permission consistent with their lifespan and/or projected period of use.

Development proposals adjacent to sites with planning consent for energy development will only be approved where the viability of the energy resource can be safeguarded.

In line with the Zero Waste Plan the Comhairle will support ‘energy from waste’ developments subject to other development plan policies and appropriate identified end users.
Small and Micro Renewables

Through increased awareness of micro-generating technologies, objectives to reduce carbon emissions, and financial and tariff based incentives there has been a significant increase in micro renewables development proposals. Installation of these technologies requires consideration to ensure that neighbouring amenity is balanced with operational efficiency.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 182 - 195; Planning for Micro Renewables Annex to PAN 45 (Renewable Energy Technologies); Planning Circular 2 2010: The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Domestic Microgeneration) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2010; The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Domestic Microgeneration) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2010; Supplementary Guidance for Wind Energy Development; SEPA LUPS GU4 Planning Guidance on Windfarm Developments; SEPA LUPS GU18 Planning Guidance on Hydropower Developments; SEPA, SNH, Scottish Renewables and Forestry Commission Scotland have produced Good practice during windfarm construction (2010).

POLICY 20: SMALL AND MICRO RENEWABLES

In addition to satisfying criteria (a) to (c) for Policy 19 (Energy Resources), micro generation renewable energy* proposals will be required to meet all the following criteria:

a) the proposal does not have an unacceptable direct, indirect or cumulative impact on residential amenity;

b) colour, form, finish and height are appropriate to the setting and are designed to minimise visual impact and distraction;

c) sufficient information is provided to enable a balanced assessment of any other likely effects of the development.

The Comhairle will assess such proposals against the Supplementary Guidance for Wind Energy Development.

* micro generation is the production of heat (less than 45 kilowatt capacity) and/or electricity (less than 50 kilowatt capacity) from zero or low carbon source technologies.
Minerals

Mineral and aggregate reserves have the potential to provide employment and materials, locally sourced, for construction. To this end, reserves of mineral deposits should be safeguarded against development that would preclude their future extraction. Whilst it is anticipated that existing quarries will meet most local demand for the foreseeable future the policy needs to be flexible enough to allow for alternative provision in particular circumstances.

Given their potential size and scale, a cautious approach is required in relation to the development of coastal super quarries. While recognising the potential employment benefit to the islands, proposals for development of sites for the export of minerals, such as super quarries, will be subject to examination of the social, economic and environmental impacts of such a development and any benefits that might accrue.

POLICY 21: MINERALS

Outer Hebrides mineral and aggregate local needs for the Plan period will be met from the following landbank of permitted reserves:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lewis</th>
<th>Harris</th>
<th>North Uist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eoropaidh (sand)</td>
<td>Aird Nisabost (sand)</td>
<td>Balemartin (sand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnish (sand and gravel)</td>
<td>Ardhasaig (rock)</td>
<td>Crogarry Beag (rock)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marybank (rock)</td>
<td>East Stocklett (rock)</td>
<td>Druim Reallasger (rock)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennadrove (rock)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loch Euphort Road End (gravel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loch Airigh na lic (rock)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loch Euphort (gravel &amp; rock)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loch Leinisical (rock)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creed Quarry (rock)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raoinabhat (rock)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benbecula</th>
<th>South Uist</th>
<th>Barra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stiaraval A (rock)</td>
<td>Askernish (rock)</td>
<td>Cleat &amp; Lower Grean (rock)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiaraval B (gravel)</td>
<td>Rueval (gravel)</td>
<td>Garrygall (gravel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eoligarry (sand)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proposals for mineral development outwith the sites listed above will require to demonstrate that needs cannot be met from: in the first instance, existing consented sites and recycled sources; in the second, the extension of existing sites, and; in the third, the reopening of dormant or old workings (subject to a Review of the Mineral Permission [ROMP] where relevant), and either:

- there are overriding operational, environmental, or community reasons for the development of the proposed site; or
- The site is required to support a clearly defined and justified local need* or single development (e.g., borrow pit for road or construction project). Where the proposal is to support a single development, the extraction site should be located within or in close proximity to the site of the associated project and will in all cases be tied to and time limited to completion of the associated project (including restoration proposals).

In addition all mineral extraction proposals, including extensions to existing sites and proposals to re-open dormant mineral workings, will be required to satisfy all the following:

a) satisfactory management, operation, transportation, and restoration arrangements to be submitted as part of the planning application. Details of how restoration of the site will be carried out both during operation and following completion should form part of a phased programme of extraction;
POLICY 21: MINERALS (continued)

b) submission of information on waste management demonstrating appropriate planning for the minimisation, treatment, recovery and disposal of extractive waste with a view to ensuring efficient production of primary materials, minimising waste generation and where appropriate recycling mineral waste;

c) wherever possible restoration and after use proposals should include the creation of new habitats and maximise recreation opportunities. If operators cannot demonstrate that their programme of restoration (including the necessary financing, phasing and aftercare of the sites) is sufficient, a financial guarantee through the use of a planning agreement may be sought;

d) submission of sufficient information as detailed within Planning Advice Note 50 paragraphs 52-57, to enable a balanced assessment of the likely effects of the development together with proposals for appropriate control, mitigation and monitoring of such effects.

Development proposals for mineral extraction for export from the Outer Hebrides will be considered against all the criteria listed above together with the impacts on the long term sustainability of the local community and environment. Consideration of such proposals will include examination of the social, economic and environmental impacts of such a development and any benefits that might accrue to the community.

All applications for a Review of a Mineral Permission will, as a minimum, be subject to a requirement for phased site restoration, and aftercare.

The Comhairle will negotiate with developers a fair and reasonable contribution towards the mitigation of impacts on the environment and local amenity arising from proposed development. The contributions will be proportionate to the scale, nature, and impact of the development (including cumulative) and will be addressed through conditions attached to the planning consent, or through a planning agreement if appropriate.

The opportunity to develop new waste management facilities on mineral sites should be considered in line with Policy 8 Waste Management.

*Local need is defined as being for the predominant use within a 10 mile radius of the extraction site.*
Fish Farming and Marine Planning

Whilst local authority planning control in the marine environment extends only to fish farming it is important that the Comhairle is mindful of all activities around its coast in particular those which may have economic, environmental or social impacts within its shores, e.g., energy exploitation, shipping and marine developments that will require associated land based facilities.

Proposals for fish farming development which have the potential to sustain and grow the industry will generally be viewed positively.

POLICY 22: FISH FARMING AND MARINE PLANNING

In reaching planning decisions, the Comhairle will have regard to the National Marine Plan and subsequent Regional Marine Spatial Plans in so far as they impact within the inter-tidal zone and on the wider coastal zone.

Proposals for new marine fish farming developments or amendments to existing marine fish farming sites will be assessed against the Supplementary Guidance for Marine Fish Farming which forms part of the Development Plan. The Supplementary Guidance sets out a spatial strategy and a development policy framework to guide fish farming development in the Outer Hebrides. The spatial strategy identifies areas for potential growth including areas subject to constraint, and areas that are sensitive to new or further fish farming development, while the development framework sets out a suite of detailed development policies against which fish farming proposals will be assessed. These policies address: Siting and Design; Landscape; Water Quality; Operational Impacts (including Site Restoration and Waste Management); Other Marine Interests; Noise and Lighting Impacts; Economic Benefit; Cumulative and Incremental Impacts.

Proposals for new freshwater aquaculture developments will be assessed against all of the following criteria:

a) acceptable location in terms of the Development Strategy;

b) sympathetic siting and design of installations and associated facilities;

c) no unacceptable adverse noise and lighting impacts;

d) satisfactory operational impacts (including site restoration and waste management arrangements);

e) no significant adverse impact on other uses of the site or neighbouring water or land;

f) no unacceptable adverse environmental or amenity impacts arising from access or servicing considerations;

g) the incremental or cumulative impact of the proposal.
Coastal Development

In the Outer Hebrides many people live and most activities take place in close proximity to the coast and its in-shore waters. Much of the islands’ economy relies heavily upon activities associated with coastal areas and the coast is used for a range of recreational purposes. Developments in the renewable energy and aquaculture sectors have increased the focus on coastal and offshore areas with a likely increasing need for coastline locations for associated facilities.


POLICY 23: COASTAL DEVELOPMENT AND EROSION

Proposals for development on land will be preferred on developed coastline (as shown on the Context map) or within existing settlements. Proposals on land within areas of undeveloped coast where no settlement exists, and along ‘isolated coastline’, will be assessed against the criteria set out in the Development Strategy and must accord with Policy 7 Flooding.

Development proposals on areas liable to erosion will only be permitted when the applicant can demonstrate that the development:

a) will have exceeded its useful life expectancy before erosion is likely to occur; or
b) is of a temporary nature; or
c) will not give rise to, or require, defence measures; or
d) is associated with the defence of the coastal area where one or more of the following is threatened:
   i. occupied buildings, or
   ii. important habitats such as the machair, or
   iii. scheduled monuments or listed buildings, or
   iv. major infrastructure and utilities.

Where development is deemed permissible the use of best practice methods of coastal protection should be employed and details should be submitted as part of the planning application.
Countryside and Coastal Access

The opportunity for outdoor recreation is a key selling point of the Outer Hebrides tourism product and is an important factor in the health and wellbeing of local island communities. The Comhairle, in partnership with other members of the Outer Hebrides Outdoor Access Forum, has developed an Outdoor Access Strategy to promote and develop access to key amenity resources and encourage responsible and sustainable attitudes both by those who partake in outdoor activity and by land managers. The primary legislation governing access to the countryside in Scotland is the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Strategy seeks to facilitate the delivery of the requirements set out in the Act. The development of a Core Path Network is a key component of this strategy and the Core Paths have been selected so as to provide a basic framework of routes sufficient for the purpose of giving both visitors and locals reasonable access throughout the Islands. This framework of routes links into and supports the wider path network.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 149 - 150; Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003; Outer Hebrides Outdoor Access Strategy; Outer Hebrides Core Paths Plan.

POLICY 24: COUNTRYSIDE AND COASTAL ACCESS

Proposed development must be located to ensure the Core Path network is kept free of obstruction. Where possible development should avoid other routes identified in the Core Paths Plan.

Proposals for improvements to, and expansion of, the existing path network (including the improvement of access to the Core Path network) that facilitates greater access and enjoyment of key natural and built heritage resources (e.g., beaches and coastline, mountains, moorland and lochs, archaeological and historic sites) will be required to:

a) accord with the Outer Hebrides Outdoor Access Strategy; and
b) demonstrate due consideration has been given to the need for associated way marking, information boards, car parking and other facilities.
Open Space

Good quality open space is important for the amenity value it provides to communities and its role in nature conservation, biodiversity, recreation and physical activity. It is important to protect open space from development where the opportunity for access is limited. In 2010 the Comhairle published the Outer Hebrides Open Space Audit (which identifies and classifies significant open space within the Greater Stornoway main settlement). It will also undertake a Sports Facilities Audit utilising best practice identified by sportscotland (to assess levels of outdoor sport facility provision appropriate to the communities of the Outer Hebrides). These audits will inform future decisions on the provision, upgrading, replacement and location of open space in Greater Stornoway and outdoor sports facilities in the islands. The term ‘existing open space’ refers to valued and functional spaces as outlined in PAN 65 and those identified in the Open Space Audit.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 149 - 158; PAN 65; Outer Hebrides Open Space Audit 2010.
POLICY 25: OPEN SPACE

Development proposals that adversely impact existing open space, as shown on the Development Strategy map, will not be supported unless there is strong justification and alternative provision is proposed that offers comparable amenity, size, accessibility and quality benefits.

The provision of new open space as part of a development may be required. This will be determined by the Comhairle appropriate to the scale of the development proposed. It will be dependent on the proposed use as well as the potential and needs of the site.

New or enhanced open spaces should be attractive, designed for the purpose and sited to promote safety, accessibility, connectivity and biodiversity. New sports pitches may require landscaping measures to minimise their impact. Provision for management and maintenance will be addressed through conditions attached to the planning consent, or through a planning agreement if appropriate.

Existing playing fields and sports pitches should not be redeveloped unless:

a) the proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field; or

b) the proposed development involves a minor part of the playing field as a whole that would not affect its overall use and potential for sport and training; or

c) the playing field which would be lost would be replaced by a new playing field of comparable or greater benefit which maintains or improves the overall playing capacity in the area; or

d) it can be clearly demonstrated that there is an excess of sports pitches to meet current and anticipated future demand in the area, and that the site could be developed without detriment to the overall quality of open space provision.
Transport Infrastructure

Efficient transport infrastructure plays a fundamental role in assisting successful economic development as well as maximising the accessibility of facilities to all residents and providing for visitors. The Comhairle’s land use planning objectives for transportation are to support improvements in the transport infrastructure including public transport and other alternatives to the use of private transport and where possible to deliver highway improvements and traffic management initiatives. The creation of new footpaths and cycle-ways in and around settlements, particularly those which allow safe access between residential areas and shopping and other community facilities and between transportation nodes may be required as part of new developments.

POLICY 26: TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The priority areas for the upgrading and development of the transport infrastructure within, and serving the Outer Hebrides, are:

a) the spinal and inter island routes;
b) the airports at Barra, Balivanich and Stornoway;
c) ports and harbours, including ferry facilities for mainland and intra island connections.

Development proposals associated with new or improved transport infrastructure and traffic management measures will be required to meet all the following:

d) fit with the character of the area in relation to the Development Strategy and the immediate surrounding area;
e) utilise a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) to deal with surface water;
f) where possible accommodate cyclists and pedestrians and secure improved road safety related to the proposal, in particular around schools, community or leisure facilities.

Provision of bicycle storage facilities will be required in new public buildings; schools; housing development consisting of flatted dwellings; and commercial or community premises where a minimum of five car parking spaces is required.

Policy on car parking is set out in supplementary guidance.
Communications

Advances in information communications technology (ICT) have increased employment opportunities within rural areas both within and outwith settlements and have the potential to reduce geographical disadvantages that communities such as those of the Outer Hebrides may experience. They can also play a key role in reducing the need to travel. ICT is fundamental to the development of the tourism industry and in the marketing and promotion of the islands. Recognising the potential benefits of ICT in helping sustain the islands, the Comhairle, in partnership with others, will strive to ensure that suitable land, buildings and infrastructure (including for broadband links) are available for the development of ICT related businesses.

Emissions of radiofrequency radiation are controlled and regulated under other legislation and it is therefore not necessary for planning authorities to treat radiofrequency radiation as a material consideration. To demonstrate to planning authorities that the known health effects have been properly addressed, applications for planning permission involving antennas to be employed in an electronic communications network should be accompanied by a declaration that the equipment and installation is designed to be in full compliance with the appropriate ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to radiofrequency radiation.


POLICY 27: COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposals for the installation of radio or telephone masts and other commercial communications equipment will be assessed to ensure that the design, siting and installation of equipment minimises visual and other impacts (including any cumulative impact) on the natural, built and cultural heritage, particularly in sensitive landscapes including National Scenic Areas (NSAs) and ‘remote areas’ as defined in the Development Strategy.

The removal of redundant masts and equipment and restoration of the site will be a condition of planning consent.

Applications for new masts will not be considered unless accompanied by a justification for the proposed site, including evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting apparatus on existing buildings, sites, masts or other structures and that there are no suitable, alternative sites available.
Natural Heritage

The Outer Hebrides has an outstanding natural heritage resource with much recognition for its special qualities, e.g., St Kilda as a World Heritage site. It is increasingly acknowledged that a high quality environment can contribute positively to economic growth and the Plan promotes sustainable development within a framework that recognises and safeguards the most important natural heritage resources of the Islands.

Traditional land management practices on the islands have helped create the character of the crofting environment and the conditions for many species and habitats to survive and thrive. The opportunity to maintain and enhance biodiversity through development proposals and restoration plans is promoted through the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

**References:** Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 134 - 145; PAN 60; EU Habitats and Birds Directives June 2004; The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations 1994; EC Habitats Directive, the EC Wild Birds Directive or the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); Scottish Biodiversity List of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance in Scotland.

Photo: Machair LIFE + Project
POLICY 28: NATURAL HERITAGE

Development which is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura site and is not directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of that site will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment by the Comhairle. Development which is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura site will only be permitted where:

- an Appropriate Assessment has demonstrated that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site, or
- there are no alternative solutions, and
- there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature.

Development that affects a National Scenic Area (NSA), a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or National Nature Reserve (NNR) will only be permitted where:

- it will not adversely affect the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been designated, or
- any such adverse effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.

All Ramsar wetland sites are also Natura sites and/or Sites of Special Scientific Interest and are included in the statutory requirements noted above.

Where there is good reason to suggest that a protected species is present on site, or may be affected by a proposed development, the Comhairle will require any such presence to be established and, if necessary, a mitigation plan provided to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the species, prior to determining the application.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would be likely to have an adverse effect on a European protected species unless the Comhairle is satisfied that:

- there is no satisfactory alternative, and
- the development is required for preserving public health or public safety or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, and
- the development will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of a European protected species at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.
POLICY 28: NATURAL HERITAGE (continued)

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would be likely to have an adverse effect on a species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 unless the development is required for preserving public health or public safety. For development affecting a species of bird protected under the 1981 Act there must also be no other satisfactory solution.

Applicants should submit supporting evidence for any development meeting these tests, demonstrating both the need for the development and that a full range of possible alternative courses of action have been properly examined and none found to acceptably meet the need identified.

Development affecting the Loch Stiapavat Local Nature Reserve (LNR) should aim to enhance the site and will not be permitted if it will have an unacceptable impact on the features of interest of the site.

In addition to the conditions listed above, developers are encouraged to assess the impacts of their proposed development on UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species and habitats and Local BAP habitats and species. Developers should refer to the Scottish Biodiversity List* for a full list of animals, plants and habitats considered to be of principal importance for biodiversity conservation in Scotland (this list includes all UK priority species).

*http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/biodiversity-scotland/scottish-biodiversity-list/
Trees and Woodland

Trees and woodland cover only very small areas in the Outer Hebrides, and native and mature planted woodlands in particular, are rare and valued assets. In a windy climate, the shelter that shrubs and trees can provide for people and livestock is of importance, and even small areas of woodland can bring a range of socio/economic benefits including increased biodiversity, carbon sequestration as part mitigation of climate change, and possibly a contribution to localised biomass production. Trees can also help to slow water flow which can be of particular significance in flood-prone catchments. The Western Isles Woodland Strategy (WIWS) supports opportunities to enhance existing native, broadleaf and non commercial woodland and to develop a diversity of new wooded areas, with the most suitable trees growing where they will thrive, giving pleasure and enjoyment as well as providing a range of social, economic and educational opportunities. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland at http://www.forestry.gov.uk/nwss provides more detail on the existing native woodland resource in the islands.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 146 - 148; PAN 60; PAN 65; Western Isles Woodland Strategy 2003; Western Isles Local Biodiversity Action Plan (Native Woodlands HAP); Western Isles Native Woodland Restoration Survey Report; Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS); Tree Preservation Order and Trees in Conservation Areas (Scotland) Regulations 2010; Control of Woodland Removal Policy 2008.

POLICY 29: TREES AND WOODLAND

Developers will be required to incorporate existing woodland resource into their schemes wherever possible and to minimise adverse impacts on the biodiversity value of this resource through sensitive siting, design and landscaping. The removal of woodland or individual trees as part of a development will only be permitted where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits for instance where they impinge on key views and their removal or restructuring may have notable landscape or visual benefits. Where loss is unavoidable, appropriate replacement planting will normally be sought through the use of planning conditions or through a legal agreement if appropriate. Developers should refer to the Forestry Commission’s Control of Woodland Removal Policy 2008 for further information.

The Western Isles Native Woodland Restoration Survey Report identifies core development areas and the Comhairle will support proposals associated with the restoration and enhancement of the native woodland resource in these areas.

Where it is in the interest of the general amenity of the area, the Comhairle will safeguard individual trees, groups of trees and woodland areas by establishing Tree Preservation Orders.
**St Kilda World Heritage Site**

St Kilda was first inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986 for its outstanding natural heritage. In 2004, the inscription was extended initially to include the surrounding marine environment and in 2005, the archipelago became the UK’s first mixed World Heritage Site and one of only twenty four worldwide when the Islands’ cultural landscape was also inscribed on the World Heritage List. The National Trust for Scotland owns St Kilda and has prepared a five year Management Plan to direct activities and development on the islands.


**POLICY 30: ST KILDA WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

Development proposals will only be permitted where the developer can demonstrate that the proposal will have no or minimal impact upon all the following:

a) visual aspects - arising from scale, form, materials and detailing;

b) historically significant boundaries and other elements of importance to the character of the site;

c) important landscape features of the site;

d) views into and out of the World Heritage Site;

e) the outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

Developers should ensure the proposal accords with the approved St Kilda World Heritage Site Management Plan.
Listed Buildings

The Outer Hebrides has variety of important built heritage resources with many structures of national as well local importance, including conservation areas, listed buildings and thatched buildings. Listed buildings are often a mark of the history of the area and demonstrate past patterns of life and many are still in use today. Listed building status provides protection for the best examples, and proposals for alterations to listed buildings are generally expected to enhance them and respect original features.

POLICY 31: LISTED BUILDINGS

The Comhairle will seek to manage the special architectural and historical interest of listed buildings and their settings and will support sympathetic conversions and extensions to secure their future use.

Proposals affecting listed buildings and/or their setting will be required to accord with national policy and guidance and, where relevant, Policy 33 Thatched Buildings. They must also:

a) be sympathetic to the listed building in terms of scale, proportion, design, materials and construction; and

b) not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the listed building(s) or its setting.

Where work to a listed building also requires planning permission, the listed building consent application shall be accompanied by a detailed planning application. An application for a planning permission in principle will not be acceptable.

Every effort will be made to retain listed buildings and bring them back into use. Full or substantial demolition of a listed building will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The requirements for assessing the case for demolition of a listed building are set out in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP).

Applications for demolition of listed buildings will require to be accompanied by details of the after use of the site. In addition, for proposals within Main Settlements (as defined in the Development Strategy) and Conservation Areas, detailed planning consent for the future use of the site will be required before consent of the demolition will be granted. In the event of any demolition consent, the developer will be required to notify the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland to allow for the building to be recorded should this be required. At least three months must be allowed for such recording to take place.
Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas have been designated because of their special architectural or historic character which is worthy of retention. Change within the Conservation Areas should be guided by the overriding principles of preserving the built heritage and enhancing it by following best conservation practice, or by encouraging high standards of design and construction in new development. The designated Conservation Areas are (parts of) Stornoway; Gearrannan; Ruisgarry; and Howmore. Conservation Area Appraisals have been prepared for each area and these have provided the framework within which Conservation Area Management Plans have been produced.

References: Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 115 – 117; PAN 71; Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997; Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP); Managing Change in the Historic Environment; Joint Working Agreement between Historic Scotland and Planning Authorities; Conservation Area Appraisals.
POLICY 32: CONSERVATION AREAS

Only applications for Planning Permission in Detail with full plans accompanied by a Design Statement, and where appropriate an Access Statement* will be acceptable for consideration of proposed development in any Conservation Area.

Developers will be expected to demonstrate how the proposal enhances or preserves the appearance or character of the Conservation Area and meets the objectives of the relevant Conservation Area Management Plan. The Management Plans are contained in the Conservation Area Management Plans Supplementary Guidance which forms part of the Development Plan.

Proposals will be assessed against all of the following:

a) the scale, form, materials and detailing respect the characteristics of the building and the locality;

b) the plot layout reflects the distinct characteristic of the area;

c) historically significant boundaries and other elements contributing to the established pattern of development in the area will be retained;

d) open spaces important to the character and historic value of the Conservation Area, including those within individual curtilages are protected;

e) important views into and out of the Conservation Area are retained;

f) landscape features contributing to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are protected.

Any proposal assessed to have a negative effect will not be permitted.

The Design Statement will set out the design principles that have been applied and should provide the justification for the approach taken in relation to the Conservation Area Management Plan. Where a redundant or derelict building is proposed to be brought back into use the Design Statement should also include a Conservation Plan which sets out the significance of the building and what policies will be adopted to safeguard its significance in the future.

The same criteria for assessing proposed demolition of listed buildings, as set out in Policy 31, will be applied to proposals for the demolition of unlisted buildings in a Conservation Area taking into consideration their contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Policy 33 will apply where works to thatched buildings within Conservation Areas are proposed.

*Access Statements are required for all Major developments.
Thatched Buildings

Scotland has one of the widest ranges of surviving traditional thatching techniques in Europe, although this has reduced steadily over the years and many are now single-known examples. The Outer Hebrides has one of the largest concentrations of surviving thatched properties within Scotland, a significant number are still in use, mainly as holiday accommodation. There is a wide range of thatching techniques and styles which in some cases are unique to the Islands. This includes the use of a thatching stick at each hip, sky lights and the roof sitting on the inner wall head in Lewis, to the use of chimneys and the roof sitting on the outer wall head in the Uists. Berneray in North Uist is unique as it incorporates both the use of chimneys and the roof sitting on the inner wall head. There is still a wide variety of thatching materials used in the Outer Hebrides including murran grass, heather, reed, straw and bere, most of which can still be obtained in the Outer Hebrides. Together this forms a unique historic and cultural asset along with a local skills base within the Outer Hebrides.


POLICY 33: THATCHED BUILDINGS

Where works are proposed to thatched buildings, either listed or located within designated Conservation Areas, it is required that they are restored to their original style. In addition to the requirements and advice contained in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and Historic Scotland’s Technical Advice Notes, all roof restoration measures will be required to reflect the local traditional style of thatched roof including pitch, ridge and eave details and where appropriate the use of skylights. Where it is considered necessary the use of sarking boards* or a layer of building paper will be permitted however the use of felt will not be acceptable. Where planning permission is required for unlisted thatched buildings within Conservation Areas, restoration of the roof in a traditional manner is preferred.

Locally sourced (i.e., Outer Hebrides) thatching materials should be used and the use of imported material from outwith the Outer Hebrides will be strongly discouraged** unless it can be evidenced that local materials are not available.

Sympathetic alterations and extensions to the original thatched building will also be considered acceptable where these will give the building a viable future.

The use of solar panels or photo voltaic panels is not appropriate on thatched buildings. However, such installations, where discreetly sited separate from the building or on an extension, may be acceptable where the impact on the site is sufficiently minimised.

*Sarking is defined as individual boards (not sheet or foil covered materials) – a minimum of 5mm between boards is advised.

**Only locally sourced material is permitted through the Historic Scotland Thatched Buildings Maintenance Grant scheme.
**Archaeology**

The importance of the Islands’ history and culture is demonstrated by their rich archaeology and much can be learnt about the past from these remains. Therefore development affecting archaeology should be carefully assessed to ensure preservation of any information that such sites might provide. This resource is not static, the effects of climate change are uncovering major new archaeological sites adding to the already rich archaeological record. Some of these sites may be of international importance and offer an as yet untapped cultural and economic resource. Many archaeological features are yet to be recorded or afforded legal protection.

**References:** Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 118 - 119 and 123; PAN 42; Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; Western Isles Sites and Monuments Record; Joint Working Agreement between Historic Scotland and Planning Authorities.

---

**POLICY 34: ARCHAEOLOGY**

Proposals that seek to protect, enhance and interpret nationally important monuments and other archaeological sites will generally be supported in line with the policy criteria. Development proposals adversely affecting nationally important remains and their settings will not normally be permitted.

Where proposals may affect regionally important sites and/or landscapes, the importance and integrity of the remains, including the potential for amenity, tourism and education purposes, will be weighed against the benefits of the proposed development, on the advice of the Regional Archaeologist. Where development is acceptable, in addition to the excavation and recording arrangements set out below, long term management, access and interpretation of the site may be required as a planning condition or through a planning agreement.

There is a presumption in favour of the preservation *in situ* of important monuments and their settings.

Where the proposal will negatively affect regionally important archaeological remains applicants will be required to undertake a desk-based archaeological assessment, a walkover survey and where appropriate a field evaluation of the archaeological remains. This information should be submitted with the planning application to inform determination of the application and any mitigation required through the use of conditions.

In order to secure the preservation of important archaeological features and their setting *in situ*, the Comhairle may use planning conditions or require a planning agreement to secure a modification. Planning applications must include a mitigation strategy to indicate how preservation *in situ* will be secured.
POLICY 34: ARCHAEOLOGY (continued)

Where the Comhairle determines that preservation in situ is not justified, and the site can be preserved by record, recording should be carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation submitted by the applicant and approved by the Comhairle. Such schemes must include proposals for the publication of any findings. In some cases a planning agreement may be required to secure mitigation.

In all cases the developer will be required to provide adequate provision for access and observation and recording by a professional archaeologist of any finds and other evidence which may be revealed during any ground works. Developers are required to allow adequate time for records to be made by the archaeologist.

Within the Stornoway Archaeologically Sensitive Area, as shown on the Development Strategy map, developers may be required to carry out an archaeological evaluation prior to the determination of the planning application if ground disturbance is part of the development. The results of the evaluation will help determine any mitigation required as part of a consent.
5. Development Proposals

HOUSING

**Housing Proposal 1 (Policy 13)**

LDP Policy 13 identifies the following sites to be safeguarded and developed for housing. The density levels are set out in Policy 13.

- Prop H1a  Crowlista – adjacent school, Lewis
- Prop H1b  Tong Road, Lewis
- Prop H1c  An Glib, Garrabost, Lewis
- Prop H1d  Melbost Farm (East), Lewis
- Prop H1e  Melbost Junction, Lewis
- Prop H1f  Oliver’s Brae, Lewis
- Prop H1g  Rear of Anderson Road Nurseries, Lewis
- Prop H1h  Dormitory (North West), Lewis
- Prop H1i  Leurbost – former school, Lewis
- Prop H1j  Balallan – Pairc junction, Lewis
- Prop H1k  Bunavoneadar, Harris
- Prop H1l  East Tarbert, Harris
- Prop H1m  Luskentyre, Harris
- Prop H1n  Balivanich – school grounds, Benbecula
- Prop H1o  Creagorry, Benbecula
- Prop H1p  Garrynamonie, South Uist

**Housing Proposal 2 (Policy 13)**

LDP Policy 13 identifies the following sites to meet any shortfall in the housing supply and provide for longer term needs. The density levels are set out in Policy 13.

- Prop H2a  Upper Coll Grazings, Lewis
- Prop H2b  Back – former community workshop, Lewis
- Prop H2c  Newmarket – Tong Road, Lewis
- Prop H2d  Goathill Farm, Lewis
- Prop H2e  Melbost Farm (West), Lewis
- Prop H2f  Vatersay, Barra

The boundaries of the H1 and H2 proposal sites are shown in the Proposal Site Maps booklet and site specific conditions are listed on the following page.
Where additional conditions apply these are indicated below.

1 Development should be set back from the water-course; any opportunities to improve the ecological status of the watercourse should be investigated.

2 Built development should avoid the flood risk area (or flood risk plain) identified including a 4 metre minimum buffer to any watercourses.

3 Housing capacity will be dependent on finalising details such as proposed phasing, programming, infrastructure and relevant development considerations including access, site extent and layout, social infrastructure and open space requirements.

4 There is a potential need for new or significantly upgraded waste water infrastructure to accommodate development at this site.

5 A planning brief will be prepared for this site in the plan period as part of statutory supplementary guidance and will address phasing, programming, infrastructure and relevant development considerations including access, site extent and layout, social infrastructure and open space requirements.

6 A flood risk assessment for this site concluded that no development should be located below 4.29m AOD.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Proposal 1  (Policy 15)

Prop E1a  Arnish, Lewis

Arnish is identified as a safeguarded first phase site in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan. The core of the industrial estate is identified as the prime location for energy related development or other appropriate large scale uses that utilise its facilities and/or require a deep water harbour.

An area within the site has been identified and safeguarded for Low Carbon/ Renewables related development purposes.

Preferred development would be in use classes 4-6. Where appropriate a planning brief may be required to help guide development.

Prop E1b  Creed Business Park, Stornoway, Lewis

Site suitable for use classes 4-6 and other commercial activities. The site can accommodate extension to the existing waste management facilities and may be suitable for appropriate co-located activities able to utilise energy from waste outputs. A high quality of development in terms of appearance will be sought particularly at the entrance plots.

Further proposals within the site will be required to demonstrate:

- compatibility with neighbouring plots/uses/buildings;
- details of placement of building(s) in relation to associated storage and external spaces, especially along road frontages. Storage activities should be located to the rear of the building and/or screened;
- quality of the scale, form, materials, colour and appearance;
- adequate access, parking and infrastructure requirements.

Prop E1c  Gleann Seileach Business Park, Stornoway, Lewis

Gleann Seileach Business Park is allocated for class 4 uses. Proposed new development should be compatible with the prestigious nature of the business park. In particular account should be taken of the relationship of the new development to the surrounding buildings in terms of design, scale and height of buildings and the materials to be used.

A programme of intended landscaping works must accompany all new proposals.

Prop E1d  East Loch Regeneration Site, Tarbert, Harris

A range of uses including business, commercial and retail may be appropriate, including a distillery and/or Harris Tweed Interpretive Centre. Associated marine related development, including pontoons are proposed.

Achievement of high design quality will be required especially along road/sea frontages on this prominent gateway site.

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been undertaken for the site. Further flood risk assessment may be required to ensure that the layout and design of any proposed development addresses and proposes measures to remove any risk from flooding.
**Prop E1e  Leverburgh Waterfront, Harris**

The site is primarily identified for business uses (classes 4-6) as well as other economic uses.

**Prop E1f  Balivanich Commercial Development Area, Benbecula**

The site is primarily identified for business uses (classes 4-6) as well as other economic uses. Compatibility with adjacent housing will depend on details of the proposed uses, layout and landscaping on the site.

**Prop E1g  Lionacleit, Benbecula**

The preferred uses fall within (classes 4-5) however, where compatible with neighbouring uses, other economic uses may be acceptable.

**Prop E1h  Castlebay Commercial Development Area, Barra**

The industrial/business area of the site will be safeguarded for use (classes 4 and 5) unless adequate alternative provision within Castlebay is identified. Compatibility with adjacent housing will depend on details of the proposed uses, layout and landscaping on the site. A FRA may be required to be undertaken to ensure that the layout and design addresses and proposes measures to remove any risk from flooding.

**Prop E1i  Energy Interconnector Sites, Lewis**

These sites are part of the infrastructure network required to upgrade the interconnector.

- Lochs Road/Arnish junction – extension to existing grid substation.
- Arnish – cable sealing compound.

**Economic Development Proposal 2 (Policy 15)**

**Prop E2a  Land at Brevig Harbour, Lewis**

Land adjacent to Brevig harbour is suitable for harbour and marine related activities.

**Prop E2b  Dormitory (South East) Business Site, Stornoway, Lewis**

A high quality road frontage appearance will be essential along with appropriate landscaping measures and access/parking arrangements that accord with the Standards for Car Parking & Roads Layout Supplementary Guidance.

A range of uses including commercial and retail may be appropriate on the site however any retail proposal will be required to satisfy the requirements of Policy 17 Retail and Service Provision. The Comhairle may require the developer to produce a retail impact assessment. A FRA may be required to ensure that the proposed design and layout addresses potential flood risk.
Prop E2c  Eireastadh, Uig, Lewis

The site is primarily identified for business uses (classes 4-6) as well as other economic uses. Compatibility with adjacent housing will depend on details of the proposed uses, layout and landscaping on the site. New or significantly upgraded waste water infrastructure may be required to support development.

Prop E2d  Habost, Pairc, Lewis

The site is primarily identified for business uses (classes 4-6).

Prop E2e  Hushinish Tourism Facilities, Harris

Proposed uses on site A include hostel accommodation with ancillary shop/café and on site B camping/caravanning, parking and interpretation/trails.

The proposals will be assessed to ensure the scale and design of proposals and the servicing / infrastructure provisions minimise the impact on the surrounding environment and landscape. The proposal for Site B will be required to accord with Policy 14 Caravans and Temporary Buildings.

Prop E2f  Land at Scalpay Bridge, Harris

The site is primarily identified for business uses (classes 4-6) where the use can be carried out without detriment to the amenity of the area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

Prop E2g  Daliburgh, South Uist

The site is primarily identified for business uses (classes 4-6).

Prop E2h  Ardveenish Pier, Barra

Land adjacent to Ardveenish Pier is suitable for harbour and marine related activities.
MIXED USE

Prop MU1  Lewis Castle, Stornoway, Lewis

It is proposed that the Lewis Castle be brought back into sustainable use, compatible with and maintaining the fabric and character of the Category A listed building. A range of uses to support corporate, leisure, heritage and events-based tourism will be acceptable.

New or significantly upgraded waste water infrastructure may be required.

Proposals for the Castle will also be assessed against the contribution they make to the experience of the Historic Garden and Designed Landscape.

Prop MU2  Former Bus Station, Stornoway, Lewis

It is proposed to develop land at the former bus station, Stornoway. Acceptable uses include commercial, retail (fronting Cromwell Street) and housing subject to all the following criteria:

a) submission of detailed plans for development of the site as a whole, showing the location of the various uses;

b) some open views of the Castle Grounds from Church St/Cromwell St are retained;

c) any port and harbour operational requirements are taken into account;

d) account is taken of the Stornoway Conservation Area Management Plan.

Prop MU3  Stornoway Airport, Lewis

In assessing development proposals in and around Stornoway Airport account will be taken of the operational needs of the airport and aerodrome safeguarding requirements.

The following uses may be appropriate:

- business/industry (use classes 4-6);
- hotel/conference facilities;
- retail – where ancillary to the main airport uses and subject to no significant detrimental impact on Stornoway’s role as the main retail centre (a Retail Impact Assessment may be required);
- housing (estimated capacity 22 units) - subject to satisfactory integration with existing settlements patterns.

New or significantly upgraded waste water infrastructure may be required.

Some areas of the site may require a FRA to ensure that the detailed layout and design of a proposed development addresses and proposes measures to remove any risk from flooding.
Prop MU4  Former Lochmaddy Hospital, North Uist
A range of uses would be suitable for the redevelopment of this former hospital site. These include housing; student accommodation; community, education, light industry or recreational uses. New or significantly upgraded waste water infrastructure may be required.

A development buffer minimum of 4 metres will be required from the edge of the freshwater loch on the site.

Prop MU5  Lochboisdale Harbour Regeneration, South Uist
Development including infrastructure, port related, business and housing uses proposed for this area. A Master Plan may be required to help coordinate development including proposed phasing. New or significantly upgraded waste water infrastructure may be required. The Developer will be required to produce a FRA to ensure that the layout and design addresses and proposes measures to remove any risk from flooding.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Prop INF1  Spinal Route
It is proposed to upgrade the remaining single track sections of the spinal route to twin track.

Prop INF2  Hebridean Way
It is proposed to progress feasibility work to enable development of a long distance route through the Outer Hebrides.

ENVIRONMENT

Prop ENV1  Cromwell Street Quay, Stornoway
It is proposed that Cromwell Street Quay is redeveloped to provide environmental improvements and improved use of space for marine related activities.

Prop ENV2  Bayhead Estuary Pedestrian Link, Stornoway
It is proposed to install a pedestrian bridge link from the Town Centre to Lews Castle Grounds. A high quality of design will be required taking account of the Stornoway Conservation Area Management Plan and impact on the adjacent A listed sea walls. The development should include proposals for the appropriate repair of the sea wall associated to bridge works.

The developer will be required to produce a FRA to demonstrate that the proposal will not exacerbate flood risk elsewhere.
6. Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation and the Action Programme

The Comhairle has an important implementation role in the delivery of the Plan. Various Comhairle departments are responsible for providing a number of services and facilities including transportation, economic development, education and leisure. The Comhairle’s Planning Service helps deliver the land use element of these activities. In exercising its development management function, the Comhairle will use the Local Development Plan together with any other material considerations to determine planning applications.

The Plan seeks to influence development and investment decisions, integrating with the strategies of other agencies to pursue the Plan’s objectives and maximise benefit for the Outer Hebrides. Local Development Plan policies and proposals are set out as being relevant, realistic and capable of implementation. Ultimately, successful implementation will depend not just on the Comhairle, but crucially, other bodies, investors, communities, and individuals who all have an important part to play by using the Plan to inform their future development considerations.

An Action Programme has been published which sets out how the Comhairle proposes the Plan will be implemented. It includes a list of actions required to deliver each of the Plan’s policies and proposals, details who will carry out the action, and the timescale for carrying out each action. In preparing the Action Programme, the Comhairle has consulted with the Key Agencies, the Scottish Ministers, and anyone named in the programme. This will serve as a tool for monitoring the Plan.

Monitoring and Review

The Comhairle has a statutory duty to maintain an up-to-date and relevant Plan for its area. Supporting data, land use decisions and implementation levels will be kept under review in order to identify the impact of the Plan, and any emerging problems, opportunities, or changing objectives. This will allow an assessment of how successfully the policies are being achieved, whether they remain valid or need to respond to any changed circumstances.

National guidance recommends that the Plan should be reviewed within a 5 year cycle. A review of the Plan and the accompanying Supplementary Guidance will reflect any changes to our policy approach.

The Action Programme will be updated to reflect progress with individual development proposals, and actions for delivering and implementing planning policies, at least every two years.
Appendix 1: Landscape Character Assessment Summary – Outer Hebrides

The Western Isles Landscape Character Assessment (Richards, 1998) was produced as one of a National Programme of Landscape Character Assessments (LCA). Its production was led by Scottish Natural Heritage in partnership with local authorities and other agencies and it is available on the SNH website*.

The LCA describes in detail the key characteristics that make the landscape of the Outer Hebrides distinctive. It also highlights the key forces for change on this landscape and offers guidance on how these might be accommodated to best relate to landscape character. While the forces for change in the landscape may have changed slightly since 1997, the key characteristics typically remain the same. Application of the information within the LCA involves the following key stages:

- identifying the landscape character type(s) in which a proposal is located
  (in reference to the two maps at the back of the LCA report);
- from the description of the landscape character type(s), identifying the key characteristics which the proposal may affect; then
- based on this information, planning, siting and designing a proposal to relate to these key characteristics.

The consideration of landscape character by an applicant should inform and direct a proposal so that it can be sited and designed to best relate to the character of the landscape which, in this case, makes the Outer Hebrides distinctive and special.

When considering a development proposal in detail, it is recommended that reference is made to the full Western Isles LCA report. However, as a preliminary and quick reference, Table 1 opposite highlights some of the key characteristics that are likely to be relevant to a development proposal.

The guidance within Table 1 on the following pages and the LCA report should be considered in combination with the policies within the Local Development Plan.

* Available at: www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/lca/
Table 1

Summary of key characteristics of landscape character types within the Western Isles LCA particularly relevant to proposed development

CROFTING SETTLEMENT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

(1) ALL CROFTING TYPES

guidance specific to individual crofting types included below

- The distinctiveness of a settlement typically arises from a unique combination of built elements and landscape management in relation to natural features. It is important that new development does not change the balance of these elements within an area or at its distinct edges, or obstructs or divides key landscape features, such as key views passing between interior moorland and the coast.

- It will be important for new buildings to follow the distinctive pattern established within the crofting settlement, relating to siting, orientation and spacing; this may be specific to the different crofting types one to four described in further detail within the following sections 1.1 – 1.4.

- A consistency of design should be maintained and/or reinforced by any new building, adopting the characteristic scale, form, proportions and style of buildings within an area. This may be achieved by sensitively-designed contemporary interpretations as well as more traditional structures. Good effect is easiest to achieve where there is limited variation between existing building types within an area. Where, conversely, there has been a lot of recent building of mixed styles, many of which do not relate to the underlying landscape characteristics, capacity for new buildings may need to be limited to a restricted suite of styles, for example through a design code, to restore cohesion and the distinctiveness of the settlement.

- On an existing croft, consideration should first be given to the possibility of renovating, or extending the original croft house or outbuildings.

- New buildings can be more easily accommodated where there is an obvious land use pattern in which they can fit to follow the existing layout. Not only should they relate to the characteristic pattern of existing buildings, but also the characteristic relationship between buildings and the surrounding land, for example following the pattern of croft tenure and the characteristic balance between built elements and natural elements (see point below regarding rural character).

- It is difficult to accommodate individual new buildings within an evenly dispersed settlement pattern without resulting in some local increase in density in the short term. However, the pattern of even dispersal can be maintained by controlling incremental development over time and ensuring that infill only increases the density of the pattern gradually and evenly within an area and avoids local concentrations.

- A linear pattern lends itself more easily to incremental addition at either end of settlement areas or as infill within gaps. However care has to be taken to follow the pattern in terms of the spacing between buildings and their position within plots. It is also important to avoid local concentration that would change the rhythmic pattern of the settlement, or excessive extension at the edges that would encroach on open space that highlights distinction between neighbouring settlements.

- In some places, there seems an irregular pattern of settlement; however, even in these locations, the position of buildings will usually have been located in relation to a consistent feature, for example slightly elevated ground to avoid poor drainage or within the lee of a slope to benefit from shelter. Thus, although the pattern may be irregular, new buildings should still relate to the same underlying features to maintain cohesion of the settlement pattern.
• Distinction of the characteristic landscape pattern is typically influenced by distinct physical edges, such as loch shores, coastlines, woodland edge or a break of slope and, if a new development is sited in direct relation to these, this connection can help it appear linked to its surroundings. It is important that new buildings relate to these distinct edges too, even though current day engineering methods may mean that there is less actual restriction on which areas can technically be developed; for example avoid buildings being constructed upon steep slopes or low-lying wet ground on which buildings within a settlement have previously avoided (and thereby may also have highlighted due to the lack of development).

• On or near to the edge of a settlement, a building should be sited and located so that it seems to extend the existing settlement following similar spacing, orientation and retaining key views. The addition of a new building at a settlement edge, both individually and cumulatively by having incremental effect, should not erode the distinction between neighbouring settlements and should enhance the entrance/exit experience.

• New buildings should be sited to respect the landform within a settlement and relate to the edge and shelter that may be provided by slopes. These factors will have affected the traditional siting of structures and thus, in this way, new buildings can appear more fitting into the existing settlement. The scale of buildings should not dominate the scale of the local landform, e.g., seeming to overwhelm it, and they should be sensitively sited and designed to minimise earthworks. Where the landform is sloping, and particularly where undulating, buildings will tend to be viewed from alternative elevations and orientations within an area, so these various views need to be taken into account when siting and designing a development.

• The distinctive nature of the landform is typically emphasised most clearly along the skyline and/or coastline and these features tend to be prominent in views. For this reason, it will be inappropriate to locate a new building upon the skyline or on the coastline unless this is following the existing pattern of development.

• In many locations, there is a horizontal emphasis to the landform, with wide open panoramas over moorland and across the sea. In these places, buildings tend to appear very prominent and isolated. For this reason, it is best to locate new developments near natural edges within the landscape, for example at the base of slopes or in relation to the coast. Where vertical features are not obvious, a more subtle rationale for the location of a building may need to be selected - perhaps an area of slightly better drained ground and/or richer vegetation or a watercourse. In addition, given the prominence of new buildings in these areas, it will be important to adopt sensitive, traditional proportions and to relate in scale, form and design to other key landscape features.

• New buildings can cumulatively affect the open and rural character of an area by changing the balance between built elements and open or agricultural land. In addition, within open and rural settings, it will be difficult to accommodate urban or infrastructure elements such as tracks or roads, power lines, signs, pavements and lamp posts without these elements seeming to dominate the local and/or rural character. For this reason, it will be important for development to minimise these elements, rationalise existing infrastructure elements and adopt styles for these elements that are ‘low key’ and rural in character.
1.1 CROFTING ONE

Settlements predominantly in northern Lewis where crofts sit on open exposed moorland edges and sweep down to the sea, typically with a linear and uniform pattern of crofts.

In addition to general guidance described above for all crofting landscape character types (or emphasising particular aspects of this), the following guidance is highlighted for Crofting One:

- On account of the typically long, sweeping, gentle slopes and exposed character of the landscape, it is particularly important to consider distant visibility as well as close visibility of any proposal within the landscape. Because of the openness and exposure of the landscape, it will also be particularly important that the form of buildings relate to traditional structures and do not appear incongruous.
- Given the typically distinct linear pattern of crofts, new development will generally be best accommodated as infill within gaps or extension at settlement edges. However, this will need to follow the characteristic spacing, orientation, scale and form of buildings within this pattern as well as the typical siting in relation to the croft land holding. At settlement edges, while extension may be possible following the linear pattern, there will be limited capacity for this, principally determined by the need to keep within the ‘natural’ edges of the settlement and/or to maintain a clear and distinct separation from other settlements. It will also be important to follow the existing pattern that retains distinction between the character of the inbye and outbye.

For further information, refer to pages 12 – 30 of the LCA.

1.2 CROFTING TWO

Settlements which generally have a linear field pattern overlain on a relatively complex landform of rocky or boggy moorland. Mainly distinguished from Crofting One by the more pronounced landform.

In addition to general guidance described above for all crofting landscape character types (emphasising particular aspects of this) the following guidance is highlighted for Crofting Two:

- This landscape character type tends to comprise both a linear pattern of crofts and an irregular landform. At the outset, when planning a new development, it will thus be important to establish which of these characteristics is most obvious and distinctive and to site and design the development in direct relation to this without contrasting to the other. It will typically be most appropriate to site a structure at the edge/base of knolls/slopes to afford shelter and avoid the impacts of constructing on slopes. It will also be important for a structure to appear inferior in scale to knolls/slopes.
- The range of elements within this landscape character type can be quite diverse. It will thus be very important to relate to the specific characteristics at a local level, including historic features where these occur.
- The open areas of common grazing that separate neighbouring settlements tend to be relatively narrow within this type and thus it will typically be difficult to locate new development at the edges of these settlements without resulting in coalescence. This means that infill within the settlement may be most appropriate as long as it follows the existing pattern and characteristics of built development.

For further information, refer to pages 31 – 41 of the LCA.

1.3 CROFTING THREE

Crofting settlements typically in coastal locations, distinguished from Crofting One and Two by its more varied landform and less regular field pattern.

In addition to general guidance described above for all crofting landscape character types (or emphasising particular aspects of this), the following guidance is highlighted for Crofting Three:

- To relate to the character of existing buildings within this landscape character type, it will typically be most appropriate to locate new structures within the small low-lying areas of flattish ground that occur between the knocks and rock outcrops. The siting and orientation of structures should also relate to landform edges so that they benefit from the shelter these afford and, where possible, orient towards the coast. Given the small scale and intimate character of this landscape, it is important that new structures do not dominate in scale, either in relation to the scale of the landform or existing buildings. Nevertheless, the high diversity of elements and irregular pattern within this landscape does allow scope for integrating new structures within existing clusters of buildings.

For further information, refer to pages 42 – 50 of the LCA.
1.4 CROFTING FOUR

Occurs only in the Uists, characterised by an almost flat landform studded with lochs and overlain by a pattern of large rectangular fields, extending along the west coast between the Machair and moorland to the east.

In addition to general guidance described above for all crofting landscape character types (or emphasising particular aspects of this), the following guidance is highlighted for Crofting Four:

- Given the vast horizontal scale and flattish landform of this landscape, vertical features including croft houses form key features that distinguish the character type and act as unifying features. These tend to be widely and evenly spaced resulting in an overriding feeling of openness. New structures should follow this even and widely spaced pattern, avoiding the creation of clusters of buildings within the landscape. Recognising the fact that buildings tend to form foci in the landscape, it is important that these relate to the form and design of traditional buildings within this landscape and appear discrete. They should also be not so prominent that they distract from the characteristic wide openness and simplicity of views within this landscape that tend to include fairly subtle features such as lochs and lochans.

For further information, refer to pages 51-61 of the LCA.

MOORLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

(2) ALL MOORLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

(further guidance specific to individual moorland types included below)

- The moorland landscapes are typically open and of large scale, with a strong sense of exposure and wide distant views. They also tend to comprise a simple and limited range of components. Most areas remain uninhabited and contain few focal features apart from lochs; rather, views tend to be directed to the coast, to adjacent settlements or to distant mountains. Given these characteristics, the introduction of any development tends to be highly prominent and may create a focal feature. For this reason, new development thus tends to be most appropriate where it is located near to existing settlement, where it is set low within the landscape, and where there is an obvious rationale for its location, e.g., due to favourable local conditions such as shelter or a bridging point.

- The introduction of new developments within an open area can introduce a feature that illustrates the scale of the landscape where this was previously difficult to perceive. Within some locations, this may result in a moorland area appearing much smaller or less extensive than it previously seemed. Not only may this seem to reduce the seemingly expansive character of the landscape and, in some places, its sense of grandeur, but it may also reduce the capacity of the area to accommodate additional features as it seems less spacious.

- The moorland landscape character types are predominantly uninhabited, with the exception of some isolated crofts and groups around coastal bays and lochs. This tends to result in a sense of wildness, particularly within interior moorland areas. This means that it is typically difficult to locate new developments within moorland areas without compromising these qualities, not only because of the presence of a structure, but also because of associated activity. However, development may be easier to accommodate within marginal areas where existing structures occur or where historic features exist such as shielings and ruined croft houses.

- As moorlands often occur around and between settlements, elements of infrastructure are often located within these areas, including telecom masts, power lines and roads. These elements tend to have significant impacts as they contrast to some of the key characteristics of moorland, such as the openness, simple land cover, and irregular landform. For this reason, it will generally be preferable to not extend these elements further and, rather, to take opportunities when/ where they arise to rationalise existing structures or replace them with more sensitive designs.

2.1 BOGGY MOORLAND

Large scale undulating peat moorlands interspersed with numerous lochans, covering large parts of the Western Isles, particularly Lewis and the Uists. Predominantly uninhabited, it is a simple landscape of few elements with an upland remote character.

In addition to general guidance described above for all moorland landscape character types, (or emphasising particular aspects of this), the following guidance is highlighted for Boggy Moorland:

- The Boggy Moorland of the Western Isles is extensive and consequently seems extremely expansive in quality, with a horizontal emphasis extending under ‘wide skies’. Because these areas tend to be highly exposed and physical conditions are generally not suited to inhabitation, new structures will typically appear highly prominent and incongruous unless there is a very obvious rationale for their location.
• As there are not many built elements within this landscape, its scale is typically difficult to estimate and areas may appear much more extensive than they actually are. This means that the introduction of a built element that can be scaled may make the area appear less extensive than was previous perceived and thus less remarkable. For this reason, built elements should mainly be kept to the margins of these areas and/or where structures already exist.

• Within the margins of these areas, cultural features often occur, such as shielings and peat cutting with associated tracks and shelters, the patterns of which often form key landscape foci. New development should not impinge upon the focal qualities of these features or on the experience of tranquility that is often experienced within these areas.

• The landform of Boggy Moorland often forms sea cliffs at the coast. It will be important that new structures do not compromise the distinctive edge formed by these cliffs or distract from views along coastal cliffs lying between the twin horizontal expanses of moorland and sea.

For further information, refer to pages 73 – 85 of the LCA.

2.2 ROCKY MOORLAND

Irregular topography of rocky knolls interspersed with peaty moorland vegetation and occasional small lochans. There is considerable diversity of form and texture. Rocky moorland is predominantly uninhabited with occasional isolated craft houses occurring in coastal locations, sheltered within the landform and frequently associated with a small natural harbour.

In addition to general guidance described above for all moorland landscape character types (or emphasising particular aspects of this), the following guidance is highlighted for Rocky Moorland:

• A key characteristic of the Rocky Moorlands landscape type is the simple balance of rocky knolls interspersed with peaty moorland, with little human influence. Much of the landscape has a strong sense of remoteness with which any new development would contrast. However, in less remote areas, development may be able to be accommodated as long as it is sited and designed carefully to fit in with the variable scale and form of the rocky topography, typically ‘tucked in’ or ‘weaving in and out’ of the landform rather than using cuttings and embankments.

• The predominance of rock outcrops and thin soils within this landscape means that it is typically difficult to construct new structures within this landscape. This means that particular care is needed when siting and designing new developments and planning construction methods to minimise ground disturbance and/or structures needing to be raised up above the ground level which would increase their prominence.

• This landscape character type often occurs within the transition between the coast and/or settlements and the more expansive interior moorlands or mountains. In this location, these areas may be under particular pressure for new developments, particularly for infrastructure. The impacts of this may be limited by focusing development in distinct areas which are of adequate scale to accommodate development and thereby allowing large tracts of moorland to retain their intrinsic characteristics unaffected.

For further information, refer to pages 86 – 101 of the LCA.

2.3 KNOCK AND LOCHAN (&) ROCK AND LOCHAN

Knock and Lochan describes a complex landscape of irregular knocks interspersed with small lochans. It is sparsely vegetated and predominantly uninhabited. Where it meets the sea there is a coastline of rocky promontories, small bays and offshore skerries. Rock and Lochan describes a small sub area of Knock and Lochan in south east Harris. It is distinct by the amount of bare rock visible and the prevalent north west - south east orientation of the rock outcrops and lochans that result in the formation of linear repetitive features.

In addition to general guidance described above for all moorland landscape character types (or emphasising particular aspects of this), the following guidance is highlighted for Knock and Lochan and Rock and Lochan:

• It is typically very difficult to locate new development within this landscape without it seeming to create a focus that contrasts to the characteristic prevalence of natural features and lack of definite scale indicators within the landscape which mean the landscape appears infinitely expansive. If new developments are located in this landscape, they need to appear of inferior scale to the knobs and appear fitted into the base slopes of these so that they do not seem to obstruct the distinctive landform horizons/skyline. In addition, they need to appear of minor prominence to avoid disrupting the characteristic balance of high and low points, with no single feature typically dominating. It is important that any development or activity associated with it does not seem to compromise the intricate scale and sense of shelter and tranquility that occurs within the low-lying areas of this landscape.
• Given the typical patchy arrangement of elements within this landscape, such as rock outcrops, knobs and lochans, it is very difficult to locate linear features without these seeming to create incongruous dividing lines. For this reason, if linear features do need to be accommodated, is typically preferable for these to be routed to follow the natural linear features that do exist such as the shore of large lochs and the coast.

For further information, refer to pages 102 –112 of the LCA.

MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

(3) MOUNTAIN MASSIF ONE AND MOUNTAIN MASSIF TWO

These landscape character types comprise mountain massif extending along most of the Outer Hebrides, between Barra in the south, along the eastern edge of the Uists, over Harris and across the southern bulb of Lewis. Individual peaks with pronounced summits rise from long ridges and steep slopes and a deeply indented coastline where the massif meets the sea. Mountain Massif Two is distinguished from Mountain Massif One by more rounded summit ridges and with a greater prevalence of rock outcrops and boulders.

• It is difficult to accommodate any new development within this landscape due to its strong qualities of wild land and wilderness which are derived partly from its remoteness, ruggedness and naturalness, although some isolated lodges, bothies and/or historic features exist. New structures may also seem impinging where previously the scale and ruggedness of the landscape was perceived to be impenetrable.

• This landscape tends to be massive in scale with a vertical emphasis, and its character is strongly defined by landform features. The location of built development may seem to compromise the scale of the landscape by introducing size indicators, as it may be perceived as a consequence to be less grand and/ or extensive in scale. However, in some circumstances, the introduction of built features may actually emphasize the scale of the mountains if they appear very small in comparison.

• It will be important for any new development to avoid seeming to contrast to key focal features within the landscape, such as focal peaks, landform horizons or the coastline.

• Given the simple pattern of vegetation and exposed rock within this landscape, it is important that any new development follows and fits in with the landform and ground cover, minimising disturbance and avoiding earthworks. Linear features such as roads or power lines tend to appear incongruous within this landscape unless following natural linear features such as glens or the coast.

• The transect between massifs to lower-lying moorland and settlement landscape character types and the coast is a distinctive characteristic of the Outer Hebrides. Thus it is important that any development does not separate or obstruct this link between the massifs to surrounding areas.

For further information, refer to pages 113 –121 of the LCA.

COASTAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

(4) MACHAIR

Found along the west coast of the islands, this highly distinctive landscape is characterised by sandy beaches and low headlands backed by dune systems which protect expansive areas of machair grassland that are a focus of agricultural activity.

• This landscape is predominantly open with a strong sense of exposure. The landform is typically flattish to gently sloping with overriding horizontal emphasis and sweeping curves. There are key views along the coast and out to sea. Within this composition, any new development is likely to appear prominent and thus should be sited and designed with great care to consider cumulative impacts, such as contribution to pattern with other vertical elements. It is very important that the scale, form and style of structures relates to traditional buildings, even if of a contemporary design, to retain the cohesiveness of settlements and the distinct character of the machair. It is also important that new buildings relate to the characteristic siting of traditional buildings upon the exposed expansive machair, typically relating to and gaining shelter from minor landform variations. This helps integrate structures into the landscape and retains the expansive, open qualities of the machair.

• New development should relate to the dispersed pattern of croft houses, avoiding concentrations that would contrast to the fairly even and widely spaced pattern of built features, with no single one dominating and, alternatively, the focus of attention tending to be dispersed and/ or directed to the coast.

• It is important that any new development relates to the characteristic balance of landscape elements within the machair - principally the combination of beaches/dunes, open agricultural fields and built elements, avoiding the concentration of structures and/or infrastructure elements such as power lines.

• It is crucial that the sensitivity of the machair as a dynamic system is considered when built development of any form is being proposed, along with the wider implications of the impacts of access roads and associated services.

For further information, refer to pages 62 – 72 of the LCA.
Appendix 2: List of Supplementary Guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To be adopted as part of the Development Plan</th>
<th>To be Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards for Car Parking and Roads Layout</td>
<td>Melbost Farm (East) Planning Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravans and Temporary Buildings</td>
<td>Melbost Farm (West) Planning Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind Energy Development</td>
<td>Goathill Farm Planning Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Fish Farming</td>
<td>Dormitory (North West) Planning Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Area Management Plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 3: Schedule of Land Owned by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Section 15(3) of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 requires that the Plan contains a Schedule of Land in the ownership of the Comhairle which is affected by site specific policies and proposals for development in the Proposed Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Comhairle owned land</th>
<th>Local Development Plan Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back, former Community Workshop, Lewis</td>
<td>Prop H2b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leurbost Serviced Plots, Lewis</td>
<td>Prop H1i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver’s Brae, Stornoway, Lewis</td>
<td>Prop H1f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balivanich Primary School Site, Benbecula</td>
<td>Prop H1n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brevig Harbour, Lewis</td>
<td>Prop E2a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gleann Seileach Business Park, Stornoway, Lewis</td>
<td>Prop E1c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Loch Regeneration Site, Tarbert, Harris</td>
<td>Prop E1d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverburgh Waterfront, Harris</td>
<td>Prop E1e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balivanich Commercial Development Area, Benbecula</td>
<td>Prop E1f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lews Castle, Stornoway, Lewis</td>
<td>Prop MU1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinal Route</td>
<td>Prop INF1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardveenish Pier, Barra</td>
<td>Prop E2h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlebay Commercial Development Area, Barra</td>
<td>Prop E1h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 4: Glossary and List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Action Programme</strong></th>
<th>A working document which sets out, in very broad terms, how and by whom the key elements of the Local Development Plan Strategy will be implemented.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affordable Housing</strong></td>
<td>Housing reserved for those for whom it would be impossible or inappropriate to pay full market price for housing in a particular area. This may be low cost owner occupation, co-ownership or rent from a registered social landlord (RLS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Archaeologically Sensitive Area</strong></td>
<td>An area where there is a concentration of important archaeological features.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate Assessment</strong></td>
<td>One part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal process. An ‘appropriate assessment’ is only required where the plan-making body determines that the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site in Great Britain, or an European Offshore Marine Site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and the plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biodiversity</strong></td>
<td>The variety of all living things in the natural world – all plants, animals and people and the ecological systems of which they are part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brownfield Land</strong></td>
<td>A site which has previously been developed or used for some purpose which has ceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character</strong></td>
<td>A combination of features which distinguish an area. These may include architectural styles, main uses, landscape type and such like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Climate Change</strong></td>
<td>The long-term change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns over periods ranging from decades to millions of years. It may be a change in average weather conditions or the distribution of events round that average, e.g., more or fewer extreme weather events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservation Area</strong></td>
<td>An area of special architectural or historic interest designated by the Planning Authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. Current locations are: Stornoway (Lewis); Gearrannan (Lewis); Ruisgarry (Berneray); and Howmore (South Uist).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservation Area Management Plans</strong></td>
<td>Plans developed by the planning authority that set out guidelines by which the special character of a particular Conservation Area can be preserved and enhanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Facilities</strong></td>
<td>Facilities which provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative Impact</strong></td>
<td>Relates to potential changes by a proposed development in conjunction with any other developments (not just similar developments) or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together. This includes proposals which have been permitted as well as those that have been submitted and are waiting to be determined. It can relate to landscape and visual effects as well as a wider range of social, economic and environmental effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Departure (from the Plan)</strong></td>
<td>A planning application considered not to be in accordance with a Plan but which due to exceptional circumstances, the planning authority intends to approve. Significant departures must be notified to Scottish Ministers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design Statement</strong></td>
<td>A design statement enables the applicant to explain why the selected design solution is the most suitable in the circumstances - in terms of the building(s) and the quality of spaces created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designed Landscape</strong></td>
<td>An area of significant parkland and woodland, generally centred upon a castle or mansion house, which has been laid out for artistic effect and identified in the “Scottish Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Land Supply</td>
<td>The part of the established housing land supply which is free or is expected to be free of development constraints in the period under consideration, and will therefore be available for the construction of housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Protected Species</td>
<td>European protected species (EPS) are species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Risk</td>
<td>The combination of the probability of a flood and of the potential adverse consequences, associated with a flood for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Risk Assessment</td>
<td>An assessment which is carried out to predict and assess the probability of flooding for a particular site or area and any impact the proposed development might have on the area and recommends mitigation measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield Site</td>
<td>Land which has not been developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitats Regulations Appraisal</td>
<td>Article 6(3) of the EC Habitats Directive requires that any plan (or project), which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site, but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an ‘appropriate assessment’. This procedure is applied in Scotland through The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &amp;c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended), and is known as the ‘Habitats Regulations Appraisal’ of plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy of Developments</td>
<td>Refers to the way in which planning applications are processed with regard to their scale into three types: National, Major and Local. This approach will ensure that applications are dealt with in an appropriate way to their scale and complexity, allowing decisions to be taken at the most appropriate level. More detailed information on this approach can be found in the Scottish Planning Series Circular 5 2009: Hierarchy of Developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Environment</td>
<td>The physical legacy of thousands of years of human activity in the form of monuments, buildings, sites and landscapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incremental Impact</td>
<td>Impact arising from a number of developments which, individually and in themselves, may have insignificant effects but together combine to create a significant impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infill Development</td>
<td>Development within a built up area, usually involving building on a gap site or between two buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Utility services (roads, sewers, and supplies of gas, water, electricity) or social and community services (schools, community halls, health centres etc) which are needed to allow a development to take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated Coast</td>
<td>Areas of wild or natural coastline that are characterised by the absence of occupied settlement, lack of road infrastructure, and absence of human activity on or off-shore, both industrial, power, port, military or tourism related.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Agencies</td>
<td>Key agencies are bodies specified by Scottish Ministers who are under a duty to engage with planning authorities in the preparation of the development plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Character Assessment</td>
<td>Landscape Character Assessments describe in detail the characteristics that make the landscape of an area distinctive. They also highlight the key forces for change on this landscape and offer guidance on how these might be accommodated to best relate to landscape character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed Building</td>
<td>A building designated by Historic Scotland on behalf of Scottish Ministers for its special architectural or historic interest and accorded special protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Housing Strategy</td>
<td>A strategy based on the assessment of housing need and housing conditions that aims to tackle the identified housing issues in the local authority area concerned over a five year period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Nature Reserve</td>
<td>An area designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982, by a local authority with high natural heritage interest and particular value for education and informal enjoyment of nature by the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Considerations</td>
<td>Matters in addition to the Development Plan which a planning authority may wish to take into account when making a planning decision. Material considerations in planning must be factors relating to the use and development of land and not to the personal circumstances of individual applicants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Nature Reserve</td>
<td>Any of several areas of land in the UK that are protected by law in order to preserve the plants and animals that live there, or to preserve other features of the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Planning Framework</td>
<td>The Scottish Government’s strategy for Scotland’s long term spatial development. It identifies key issues and drivers of change, sets out a vision to 2030, and identifies priorities and opportunities for each part of Scotland in spatial perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Scenic Area</td>
<td>An area of land designated by the Scottish Government and considered of national significance to Scotland due to their outstanding scenic interest and which must be conserved as part of the country’s national heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natura 2000 Network</td>
<td>EU wide network of nature conservation sites (SACs and SPAs) established under the EC Habitats and Birds Directives. Ramsar sites are also protected under this statutory regime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification/ Safeguarding Zones</td>
<td>Defined areas within which a specified Government agency or department must be notified of development proposals. Examples include airports and locations where hazardous or dangerous materials are stored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open space</td>
<td>Open space includes greenspace consisting of any vegetated land or structure, water or geological feature within and on the edges of settlements, including allotments, trees, woodland, paths and civic space consisting of squares, market places and other paved or hard landscaped area with a civic function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Advice Note (PAN)</td>
<td>A series of Scottish Government documents on specific planning issues, providing advice on good practice and information to planning authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Plan</td>
<td>A stage in the preparation of the Local Development Plan. This forms the plan that a planning authority would wish to see adopted and will consult upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsar Site</td>
<td>A site listed as a wetland of international importance under the provisions of the ‘Ramsar Convention’. A Ramsar site is not a European site as a matter of law, but all Ramsar sites in Scotland are also European sites and/or Sites of Special Scientific Interest and are protected under the relevant statutory regime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retail Impact Assessment</strong></td>
<td>A study which assesses the likely effect a new development will have on existing shops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>River Basin Management Plan</strong></td>
<td>River Basin Management Planning is a requirement of the Water Framework Directive which has led to the preparation of River Basin Management Plans that promote sustainable water use in a way which protects and improves the water environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scheduled Ancient Monument</strong></td>
<td>A monument or site of archaeological importance which has been scheduled for protection by Historic Scotland under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Special consent from Historic Scotland is required for any form of works affecting the monument, in addition to any planning permission required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scottish Planning Policy</strong></td>
<td>Scottish Government planning policy on land use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</strong></td>
<td>Area of land or water of special interest by reason of its flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features identified by SNH and designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)</strong></td>
<td>The purpose of the SOA is to identify areas for improvement and to deliver better outcomes for the people of the Outer Hebrides, through specific commitments made by the local authority, its community planning partners and the Scottish Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Area of Conservation (SAC)</strong></td>
<td>Special Areas of Conservation under the EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna. All SACs are European sites and part of the Natura 2000 network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Protection Area (SPA)</strong></td>
<td>Special Protection Areas under EC Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Birds. All SPAs are European sites and part of the Natura 2000 network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</strong></td>
<td>An assessment of the environmental impacts of any plan, programme or strategy of any public body in Scotland as required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 which transposes the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effect of certain plans and programmes on the environment).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supplementary Guidance</strong></td>
<td>A document which gives further detail on policies and proposals within the Plan and has the same statutory basis as the Plan itself once adopted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Development</strong></td>
<td>Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (as defined by the Bruntland Commission 1987 for the United Nations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)</strong></td>
<td>Drainage techniques used to treat and return surface water run off from developments (roof water, road run off, hard standing areas) to the water environment (rivers, groundwater, lochs) without adverse impact upon people or the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure Mix</strong></td>
<td>A mix of different types of housing: affordable, rented or part-rented and private owner-occupied in order to create better mixed, economically viable and sustainable communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Transport services and facilities, including roads, bus services, and ferry links, that are needed to allow development to take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tree Preservation Order</strong></td>
<td>Mechanism for safeguarding trees and woodland where this appears expedient in the interests of amenity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Use Classes** | The statutory instrument termed the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997/No.3061, which sets out various classes of use for the purpose of clarifying when a change of use requires planning permission. Summarised below:  
Use class 1: Shops;  
Use class 2: Financial, professional & other services;  
Use class 3: Food and drink;  
Use class 4: Business;  
Use class 5: General industrial;  
Use class 6: Storage or distribution;  
Use class 7: Hotels and hostels;  
Use class 8: Residential institutions;  
Use class 9: Houses;  
Use class 10: Non-residential institutions;  
Use class 11: Assembly and leisure;  
Types of development not belonging to the above classes are referred to as ‘*sui generis*’ uses (e.g., fun fairs, scrap yards and hot food takeaways). |
| **Viability** | A measure of the capacity to attract ongoing investment for maintenance, improvement and adaptation to changing needs. |
| **Waste Management Hierarchy** | An approach to the management of waste: prevention; re-use; recycle; recovery and disposal. |
| **Water Framework Directive** | The Directive sets a framework which should provide substantial benefits for the long term sustainable management of all inland and coastal water bodies. |
| **Wild Land Character** | Land that is characterised by being relatively remote and inaccessible, not noticeably affected by contemporary human activity. |
| **Windfall Sites** | Development sites which are not identified through forward planning processes but become available for various *ad hoc* reasons. Allowance for a certain level of windfall sites is usually made by planning authorities when calculating the forward supply of development land for which Development Plans will make provision. |
| **World Heritage Site** | World Heritage Sites are inscribed by UNESCO as cultural and/or natural heritage sites which are of outstanding universal value. |
| **Zero Waste Plan** | A national plan which proposes to increase resource efficiency and waste prevention in order to reduce the amount of municipal and commercial waste. |
### List of Acronyms in the Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOD</td>
<td>Above Ordnance Datum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>Flood Risk Assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICNIRP</td>
<td>International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communications Technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBN</td>
<td>National Biodiversity Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMP</td>
<td>Review of the Mineral Permission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPA</td>
<td>Scottish Environment Protection Agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHEP</td>
<td>Scottish Historic Environment Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNH</td>
<td>Scottish Natural Heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI-LCA</td>
<td>Western Isles - Landscape Character Assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIWS</td>
<td>Western Isles Woodland Strategy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>