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| Reference no: | 24/00917/PREAPP | Date of Issue: | 10 th June 2024 |
| Proposal: | Erection of affordable housing units, woodland crofts and mixed-use development at 2no. (associated) sites on land at Ratagan & Saraig | Address: | Land 110M SE Of Ratagan House Glenshiel |
| Case Officer: | Karolina Slotwinska | Email and Tel No: | karolina.slotwinska@highland.gov.uk 01349 868458 |
| Case Officer Designation: | Graduate Planner | Reviewed by: | MH |

Description of Proposal and Summary of Key Points

The proposal consists of a few individual developments which together lead to an initiative of mixed development of two areas located within the settlement of Saraig and Ratagan, on the Southern side of Loch Duich.

The smaller site lies just across the road from Ratagan Youth Hostel and the larger site, split into 3 parts, is located further to the East along the single track public road and within the Saraig area. Both locations are proposed to serve as a combination of affordable housing and enterprise/business units with a growing space and a woodland-based enterprise. The Saraig site will, in addition, have a community enterprise, for example a campsite.

Based on the information submitted all elements of the overall proposal are likely to be supported as the development meets the criteria of relevant policy by helping to revitalise the area and also by helping to support and sustain existing fragile communities of Saraig and Ratagan.

Any future applications shall take note of the current climate and nature crises, ensuring the proposal utilises renewable energy sources and adapts to climate change, with measures included to promote biodiversity gain.

Any future dwelling designs shall accord with the siting and design advice provided within the Council's *Rural Housing Supplementary Guidance*. Any future development should look to protect existing trees both within and immediately surrounding the site, with compensatory tree planting provided to compensate for any unavoidable tree loss. Forestry Officer will be consulted on all elements of the project.

Due to the proximity of some elements of the project to the shoreline, there might be a possibility of flooding on which Flood Team and SEPA would be consulted.

The sites are within Kintail National Scenic Area therefore, depending on the nature of the individual developments, Design and Access Statement, Habitat Surveys, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments will be required together with consultations with NatureScot.

The Ratagan site is adjacent to listed buildings (both B and C categories) therefore, consultation with Historic Environment Scotland and in-house Conservation Team will need to be undertaken to allow assessment of the proposals' impact on settings of the neighbouring, protected buildings.

Due to scale and nature of the development, a consultation with Transport Planning team will be necessary.

You are advised that the following consent(s) will be required for the proposed development:

Planning Permission

Building Warrant

| Planning History | | | |
|------------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Reference | Description | Date of Decision | Outcome |
| 14/03317/PREAPP | Residential development of 1-2 building plots of alternative small-scale tourism accommodation | 23 rd September 2014 | Supportive response |

| Planning Policy |
|--|
| <p><u>National Planning Framework 4 (February 2023)</u></p> <p>Policy 1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises</p> <p>Policy 2 - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation</p> <p>Policy 3 - Biodiversity</p> <p>Policy 4 - Natural Places</p> <p>Policy 5 - Soils</p> <p>Policy 6 - Forestry, Woodland and Trees</p> <p>Policy 7 – Historic assets and places</p> <p>Policy 14 - Design, Quality and Place</p> <p>Policy 17 – Rural homes</p> <p>Policy 22 – Flood risk and water management</p> <p>Policy 25 – Community wealth building</p> <p>Policy 26 – Business and industry</p> <p>Policy 29 - Rural Development</p> |
| <p><u>Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012)</u></p> <p>Policy 28 - Sustainable Design</p> <p>Policy 29 - Design Quality & Place-making</p> <p>Policy 31 - Developer Contributions</p> <p>Policy 32 - Affordable Housing</p> <p>Policy 36 - Development in the Wider Countryside</p> <p>Policy 41 - Business and Industrial Land</p> <p>Policy 51 - Trees and Development</p> <p>Policy 52 - Principle of Development in Woodland</p> <p>Policy 57 - Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Policy 61 - Landscape</p> <p>Policy 64 - Flood Risk</p> <p>Policy 65 - Waste Water Treatment</p> <p>Policy 66 - Surface Water Drainage</p> |
| <p><u>West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (2019) (WestPlan)</u></p> <p>Within Kintail National Scenic Area (NSA)</p> |
| <p><u>Highland Council Supplementary Guidance</u></p> <p>Affordable Housing</p> <p>Access to Single Houses and Small Housing Developments (May 2011)</p> <p>Developer Contributions (November 2018)</p> <p>Flood Risk & Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)</p> <p>Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)</p> <p>Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (March 2013)</p> |

Rural Housing Supplementary Guidance (2021)
Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)
Trees, Woodlands and Development (Jan 2013)

Assessment

Main Issues

- The proposed residential buildings are likely to be supported by the Planning Authority if they are sympathetic to the local landscape character and if they respect their heritage qualities.
- The proposed enterprise/business units and the woodland-based enterprise are likely to be supported if they are of adequate scale and design respecting the character and qualities of the local area, including the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- The growing space initiative is likely to be supported provided that it is sympathetic to the other elements of the initiative and to the local landscape character.
- Development should look to protect existing trees, with compensatory tree planting provided to compensate for any unavoidable tree loss.
- Possibility of flooding, especially relating to the near shore and watercourses' locations.
- Required inclusion of appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity within the application site.
- Global climate and nature crises with development encouraged to minimise emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change.

Issues Raised By Consultees

Development Plans Team raised no objections to the proposed developments however, it was highlighted that further information will be required to be submitted for the full planning application. A developer contribution might be required towards community facilities (£1,540 tbc). Please see the response online for detailed information.

Planning Appraisal

The sites are situated in the rural area therefore, all residential elements of the proposal require to be primarily assessed against Policy 17 – Rural Homes of the NPF 4. The application site is located within an area designated as a remote rural area. Under NPF 4 Policy 17 (c), being the lead policy in this case, development proposals for new homes in remote rural areas will be supported where the proposal:

- i. supports and sustains existing fragile communities;
- ii. supports identified local housing outcomes; and
- iii. is suitable in terms of location, access, and environmental impact.

In this case the Development Plan is also comprised of the West Highlands and Islands Local Development Plan and the Highland-Wide Local Development Plan, the relevant policies of which are considered below.

The site lies outwith any defined Settlement Development Area, and therefore falls to be considered under Policy 36 which states that development proposals in the wider countryside will be assessed on the extent to which they:

- are acceptable in terms of siting and design;
- are sympathetic to existing patterns of development;
- are compatible with landscape character and capacity;
- avoid, where possible, the loss of locally important croft land; and
- would address drainage constraints and can be adequately serviced, particularly in terms of road access, without involving undue public expenditure or infrastructure that would be

out of keeping with the rural character of the area.

Development proposals may be supported if they are judged to be not significantly detrimental under the terms of this policy.

The initiative would create local employment and use locally sourced building materials which in turn would support economic activity for the local community. As such, the development is considered to comply with Policy 17.

The business-related elements of the proposal require to meet requirements of Policy 26 of NPF4 which supports proposals for business and industry uses if they are compatible with the primary business function of the area. Its outcome is recovery within the sector which is sustainable and inclusive.

Vibrant and sustainable rural places and supported rural communities and businesses are one of the aims of Policy 29 of NPF4.

The sites are within Kintail NSA therefore, requirements of Policy 57 of HwLDP and Policy 4 of NPF4 must be considered to avoid negative impact on integrity and protected qualities of the site.

Additionally in response to the ongoing climate and nature crises, and to enhance biodiversity, policies; 1 – Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises, 2 – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation, and 3 – Biodiversity, of the NPF4 require to be considered. These policies state that when considering all development proposals, significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises, with development encouraged to minimise emissions, adapt to current and future risks of climate change, and include appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity.

Other pertinent policy considerations from the HwLDP includes policies: 51 - Trees and Development, 65 - Waste Water Treatment, and 66 - Surface Water Drainage.

Siting, Design and External Appearance

The application site is recognised as within a remote rural area according to the SG Urban Rural Classification. In accordance with Policy 17 – Rural Homes of the NPF4, the proposal meets the criteria of this policy. The proposal is considered to help to support and sustain an existing fragile community by allowing people to reside and contribute economically within the area. The proposal would also help to increase the supply of housing in Highland with enough homes in the right places to meet housing needs as established by Outcome 1 of the Council's Local Housing Strategy.

The enterprise units are considered to meet the objectives of policies 25, 26 and 29 of the NPF4 as the whole project would boost the local economy and help the communities to thrive sustainably.

Housing in the Countryside

Where it is demonstrated that the principle of siting can be supported, consideration requires to be given to the design. Policy 28 (Sustainable Design) of the adopted HwLDP states that proposals must demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design which is in keeping with local character and historic and natural environment and in making use of appropriate materials. Design which is generally supported as highlighted within the Housing in the Countryside and Siting and Design Supplementary Guidance includes the following traditional features:

- Houses which are single or 1 and ½ storey with dormer windows.
- Predominantly rectangular in shape with square gable ends.
- Walls finished with wet dash render or stone work which may incorporate timber cladding and be sympathetic to the existing properties in the area.
- Buildings should incorporate a roof pitch of 40 to 45 degrees and be covered by natural slate.
- All windows should have a strong vertical emphasis.

Contemporary designs are also generally acceptable and will be assessed on their own merits.

Transport and Access

Proposals for houses are expected to provide vehicular access in line with current standards - Highland Council's Guidance: Access to Single Houses and Small Housing Developments (2011) https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/2346/access_to_single_houses_and_small_housing_develop

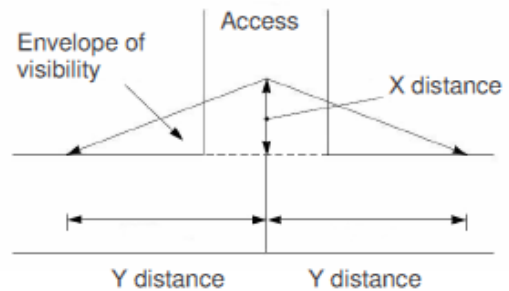
[ments](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/99/roads_information/2) and Highland Council Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/99/roads_information/2. A completed Private Access Private Checklist requires to be submitted with a planning application (p.27-29 of the Access to Single Houses and Small Housing Developments Guidance).

Proposals are required to show details of off-street parking within the curtilage of a house for at least two spaces per 1-3 bedrooms/three spaces per 4-5 bedrooms and where appropriate sufficient provision for vehicles to turn and exit the site in a forward gear.

Visibility splays require to be provided at the junction of a private access with the public road, appropriate to the assessed traffic speed according to the table below.

| SPEED MPH | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 'Y' Distance in metres | 90 | 120 | 160 | 215 |
| 'X' Distance in metres | 2.4 | | | |

Table 4.3.1



Sketch 4.3.1

The rule of thumb is a driver's eye at a height of 1.05m positioned 2.4m back from the public road should see an object at a height of 0.60m at a distance of the stated splay distance. Visibility splays must be capable of being maintained on site in perpetuity.

The access junction with the public road must have a service bay of Council Standard SDB1 or SDB2 incorporated in to it. This must also have adequate bin storage facilities, be appropriately surfaced, kerbed and have adequate drainage to ensure that rainwater does not runoff on to the public road.

The application site red line boundary must include the access up to the junction with the public road. Parking and turning provision, visibility splays and service bay details require to be annotated on a site layout plan, as part of the planning application.

Any core paths within the vicinity of the application site should remain accessible during and after construction.

Drainage and Water

It is prudent for the developer to confirm with Scottish Water, prior to submitting a planning application, that there are no issues with connecting to the public mains water system and that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development. If it is proposed to supply fresh water from a local borehole, the borehole must be clearly marked on the plans, with details of abstraction provided as part of the planning application.

New developments are expected to connect to the public sewer system unless it can be demonstrated that there are technical or economic constraints to connection. Where a land soakaway is proposed for foul drainage, percolation test results should be submitted to demonstrate the ground conditions are suitable for such an arrangement.

Pursuant to Policy 66 of the HwLDP, the surface water of all proposed development must be drained by Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) designed in accordance with The SuDS Manual (CIRIA C753) and, where appropriate, the Sewers for Scotland Manual 4th Edition.

All drainage arrangements must be included with the application red line site boundary.

Private Foul Drainage

For a private foul drainage system, you should note that the Council as Roads Authority would not accept any connection or discharge of foul effluent, or surface water drainage from a site into a road drainage

system. This *means* effluent discharge into the public road drainage system, via a gully, direct connection to a ditch or piped filter drain, or informal discharge into the system *is not acceptable*.

All drainage must be dealt with privately within the curtilage of your land sufficiently away from the public road. The public road, by definition, includes verges, ditches, paths and footways, embankments, and cuttings as well as carriageways. Such systems would also need to meet the minimum separation standards currently required by the Building Standards Authority.

Flood Risk

The application site is within an area identified as being at risk of flooding. A planning application must include a flood risk assessment or a plan with site levels (a topographical survey). Failure to provide this will result in an automatic objection from SEPA and a delay in processing of the application.

Natural and Built Heritage

Policy 57 of the adopted Highland wide Local Development Plan requires proposals to take into account the level of importance and type of heritage features and to demonstrate that the proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource.

Trees

Due to the proximity of the proposal to existing trees, in accordance with Policy 6 – Forestry, woodland and trees of the NPF4 and Policy 51– Trees and Development of the HwLDP, proposals which enhance, expand and improve tree cover will be supported. Any future application should detail the extent of existing trees both with and surrounding the application site, incorporating measures to protect these trees and proposals for additional tree planting.

Climate and Nature Crises

NPF4 sets out that when considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises with development encouraged to minimise emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change. Therefore, any future proposal should look to minimise carbon emissions, utilise renewable energy sources and promote the usage of natural light.

Policy 3 of the NPF4 states that local development proposals should include appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with national and local guidance, with proposed measures proportionate to the nature and scale of development. Therefore, any future application should demonstrate relevant measures to aid biodiversity within the application site following development completion. This could be in the form of greenery, tree planting, hedges or shrubs which can provide food, shelter and safe corridors for movement across a site, encouraging priority species.

Developer Contributions

The Council's [Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance](#) will be used in the determination of planning applications and requires all development, including single house developments, make proportionate financial developer contributions towards meeting service and infrastructure needs in areas of Highland where clear deficiencies are identified.

For the proposed development, the anticipated developer contribution requirements are outlined below.

£1,540 (tbc) towards community facilities.

Please note that requirements can change over time and the exact amount payable will be confirmed at the point that a planning application is determined.

Consultees For Any Future Application

The following will likely be consulted on any planning application submitted. On occasion it may be necessary to involve consultees who are not listed below as an application progresses.

Highland Council Consultees

Access Officer
Development Plans
Historic Environment Team - Conservation
Flood Team
Forestry Officer

External Consultees

Historic Environment Scotland
NatureScot
Scottish Water
SEPA

Additional Information Required For Any Future Application

Based on the information provided, you are advised to submit the following additional information with any future application for formal permission. If you choose not to follow our advice and do not submit one or more of the documents, then you should provide a clear justification for doing so.

Ecological/Species Survey

Design and Access Statement

Flood Risk Assessment/Drainage Impact Assessment

Landscaping/Planting/Maintenance Plan

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Private Access Checklist

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/101/permits_for_working_on_public_road_s/4

Questionnaire for Planning Applications involving Industrial or Commercial Uses

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/10909/questionnaire_for_planning_applications_involving_industrial_or_commercial_uses

Tree/Woodland Survey/Tree Constraints Plan/Management Plan

Making a Formal Application

Online application forms and guidance are available at:

<https://www.eplanning.scot/ePlanningClient/default.aspx>

Disclaimer

This advice is based on the information submitted and is given without prejudice to the future consideration of and decision on any application received by The Highland Council.

Pre-application case files are not publicly available but can be the subject of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests.

Appendix – Useful Weblinks

The Highland Council Development Plans

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

Highland Council Supplementary and Development Guidance Listed by Category

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

Roads/Access and Transport

More information on access and parking standards (incl. small housing developments) can be found at:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/101/permits_for_working_on_public_roads/4

Access Panel

The Council encourages applicants at pre-application stage to engage with the local Disability Access Panel to consider accessibility improvements for physically disabled and sensory impaired people. The Highland Council has published a [Planning Protocol for Effective Engagement with Access Panels](#), which you should take into consideration

Scottish Government

Scottish Government Planning and Architecture Guidance

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/planning-architecture/planning-guidance/>

Scottish Water

Contact Scottish Water for guidance on connections to the public water/drainage network:

<https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/en/Business-and-Developers/Connecting-to-Our-Network/Pre-Development-Information/Planning-Your-Development>

SEPA

Advice for Developers

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/land/planning/advice-for-developers/>

Historic Environment

The Highland Historic Environment Record (HER) contains detailed information about listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeological sites in the Highland area:

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

General advice on development affecting historic designations can be found at:

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/>

Protected Species - SNH

More information on Scotland's protected species and areas can be found at:

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/safeguarding-protected-areas-and-species/protected-species>

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/natural-heritage-advice-planners-and-developers/planning-and-development-protected-areas>

Trees and Woodland

The Scottish Government's woodland strategy and associated policies can be found here:

<https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/control-of-woodland-removal>

The Council's guidance on tree/woodland issues can be found here:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1225/countryside_farming_and_wildlife/63/trees_and_forestry/