



**Sutherland**  
Soaring to Success

**SUTHERLAND PARTNERSHIP**

[www.sutherlandpartnership.org.uk](http://www.sutherlandpartnership.org.uk)



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**Aim of this document:**

***“To help LEADER to strengthen Sutherland’s communities by describing how LEADER will work here, and outlining what our priorities for action will be.”***



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## **FOREWORD BY SUTHERLAND PARTNERSHIP CHAIRMAN.**



**Robbie Rowantree**

Sutherland, though far from urban centres and with the problems which rurality and super-sparse population impose, is a dynamic and forward-looking society which aspires to achieve the conditions that can see the development of all of our communities in Sutherland over the next 4 years. Sutherland Partnership is pleased to have the opportunity to present its plan for Sutherland development, in the light of the prospect of valuable LEADER funding over the years to 2013.

We have every confidence that LEADER and Sutherland will prove a powerful partnership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robbie Rowantree'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial 'R' and a distinctive flourish at the end.

Councillor Robbie Rowantree

## Introduction.

### What is the purpose of this document?

This is the document which sets out the case for Sutherland Partnership as the Local Area Partnership for delivery of Highland LEADER in Sutherland, that is Highland Council Wards 1 (North West and Central Sutherland) and 5 (East Sutherland and Edderton). It has been drafted using input from community consultations and from Sutherland Partnership Partner Organisations. It is issued with the authority of the Sutherland Partnership Board.

### What are the parts of this document?

Following Highland LEADER guidance, this Development Plan falls into four parts.

- Part 1 describes Sutherland Partnership, summarising its history as Sutherland's community planning partnership, its partners and governance, its achievements, and its involvement with LEADER+, the previous LEADER round.
- Part 2 summarises the particular characteristics of the (former) county of Sutherland, a supersparsely populated part of the United Kingdom with particular needs – but also with marked recent achievements in self-help, and particular strengths.
- Part 3 documents Sutherland Partnership's history of engagement with Sutherland's communities, describes what has been done to consult with communities on the new LEADER arrangements, and sets out the membership of the new Sutherland LEADER Local Area Partnership.
- Part 4 quotes the seven strategic themes of LEADER, and briefly lists some generic types of possible development opportunities.
- In addition, there are three annexes:
  - ◆ Annex A - a glossary of terms
  - ◆ Annex B - pie charts showing the hierarchy of priorities expressed by the two Sutherland ward forums and the subsequent written Sutherland consultation;
  - ◆ Annex C - an illustrative list of possible projects. **It is important to note that:**
    - This project list is not exhaustive, exclusive or final. During the period of our consultation, LEADER paperwork had not yet produced an application form for communities to use and, for much of the consultation period, had not had an enquiry form. Now that both of these are available it is appropriate to list the first projects to express an interest in LEADER funding.
    - We expect many further projects to become visible, and in many cases to receive LEADER funding, during the years of the LEADER initiative to 2013, and we hope and expect that the inclusion of this project list will stimulate interest and trigger further applications.

### What Happens Next?

This LEADER Development Plan for Sutherland is the first phase of a two-phase process. This document is to establish the credentials of Sutherland Partnership as the LEADER Local Area Partnership for Sutherland. The next step is to write the Development and Action Plan for Sutherland, which will start from this document's Part 4, will include a dynamic, flexible list of projects which are bidding, or intend to bid, for LEADER funding. It will track their progress through "the system", listing their participants, measuring them against LEADER criteria and allocating milestones and time scales. LEADER funding will be sought for the work of writing this Development and Action plan, and it will be subject to periodic review, probably stemming from the successive phases of LEADER allocations.

## **Part 1. Partnership - a Description of Sutherland Partnership.**

### **1.1 Sutherland Partnership – Background Information**

Sutherland is the most sparsely-populated former county in Great Britain, and one of the largest. It neatly covers two new Highland Council Wards<sup>1</sup> and has particular and unusual community needs. Sutherland Partnership (SP) was set up to help meet these.

Founded in 1998 as a company limited by guarantee, SP is an independent body which aims to secure the economic and social well being of Sutherland by tackling the problems of rural disadvantage.

### **1.2 Governance: Our Partner Organisations, and how they Give Strategic Direction to our Work.**

The Partnership's work is directed by a Board of Management whose members are drawn from its partner organisations: key public service agencies, the private sector, the voluntary sector and community organisations. Member organisations are:

- Highland Council
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- NHS Highland
- Voluntary Groups East Sutherland
- CVS North
- Forestry Commission (Scotland)
- National Farmers' Union
- Scottish Crofting Foundation
- North Highland College
- Northern Constabulary.

The SP Board meets three-monthly.

Over the past decade a high level of trust has developed between the partners, due to the regular contacts which SP meetings permit, and due to successive worthwhile outputs and outcomes which SP has produced over the years.

### **1.3 Organisation of SP Activities.**

SP works in four ways:

- Through the work of staff of our partner organisations. The regular SP Board meetings (see above) give partner representatives a better view of each other's work, and the common agendas to which they are working. This permits increased cohesion between their staffs' work on key current issues.
- Through the work of the SP Manager. The manager, a full-time employee, acts as a facilitator for a range of activities and forums, contributes to non-SP local forums and action groups, and sits at the centre of a Sutherland-wide communications network. This network still has gaps, and efforts to "spread the word" among Sutherland's communities are continuing. The Manager is assisted (one half day per week) by an experienced accountant as Treasurer.
- Through SP thematic subgroups. See "SP Thematic Subgroups" section below.

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<sup>1</sup> North, West and Central Sutherland (HC Ward 1) and East Sutherland and Edderton (HC Ward 5)

- Through our Projects. These are: New Futures Sutherland/Working for Families; and the North West Highlands Geopark. These subgroups employ a further thirteen SP employees (6 FTE approximately, depending on client load.) See “Project Organisations” section below.

### **1.3.1 SP Thematic Subgroups.**

Sutherland Partnership’s thematic sub-groups are:

- Community Development Forum
- Tourism Forum
- Transport Group
- Biodiversity Group.

Chaired by Partner organisation representatives<sup>2</sup>, these subgroups operate across a range of themes and topics. In addition to the bodies from which SP Board members are drawn, subgroups have representation from business, commerce and youth. Attracting agency representatives to SP subgroup meetings is the easy part, of course; encouraging participation by business and community representatives is ongoing, and will be helped by the recent Board decision to pay travel expenses to those who cannot claim from elsewhere. The subgroups’ common denominator is that they bring community and trade representatives around the same table as agency employees. In this way, these sub-groups fulfil one of the key aims of community planning: by processes of information, facilitation and lobbying, to allow an avenue by which communities can influence the products with which agencies supply them. This establishes them as genuine community groups demonstrating the modern participative form of democracy and producing valuable outputs.

### **1.3.2 SP Projects.**

**1.3.2.1 New Futures Sutherland / Working for Families.** Launched in 1999 as part of the Scotland-wide New Futures initiative, New Futures Sutherland (NFS) is one of the few such organisations still surviving. Aimed at helping disadvantaged and vulnerable people (mostly young people) into work, volunteering or training, NFS works by offering clients one-to-one mentoring, guidance and support in their own homes, helping them to overcome their own barriers to success. The worth of the NFS product was recognised last year by the award of a £375,900 Big Lottery Grant to last until 2012. In Sutherland’s supersparse population environment, NFS works particularly well, complementing the work of Government agencies such as Jobcentres which find it so hard to establish a presence here. Success rates, at around 60%, are high, and are believed to compare more than favourably with similar organisations elsewhere. In Sutherland, NFS also delivers the Working for Families (WfF) service. WfF work also seeks to prepare people for work, but works with a different clientèle – those overcoming family logistical difficulties in finding employment. This “joined up” approach to helping Sutherland’s people into work is believed to be unique. It is certainly successful.

**1.3.2.2 North West Highlands Geopark.** The North West Highlands have beautiful scenery, strong communities and world-class geology. These assets were the basis for the setup, in 2004, of the North West Highlands Geopark (NWHG), a Sutherland Partnership project. The Geopark covers the area of five local community councils – one in Wester Ross and four in Sutherland, and for its first three years, the Geopark had just one part-time (0.5FTE) employee.

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<sup>2</sup> SPCDF: chair Ann Keatinge VGES; SPTF: chair Durrant Macleod North Highland Tourism; SPTG chair Cllr Ian Ross OBE; SPBG chair William Sutherland, Sutherland Partnership.

Our Geopark is one of 33 partners in the European Geopark Network (EGN). Globally there are 57 Geoparks - all endorsed by UNESCO. Like ours they are all driven by local communities seeking to celebrate their geological heritage, encourage and organise community activities, and achieve sustainable business development. In the short time since its inception, our Geopark has established a major reputation among our EGN colleagues, successfully hosting the EGN Conference which brought around 200 international delegates to the area in autumn 2007 for a 2 week programme and brought an estimated £150k into the local economy. Locally, the Geopark has run community education and participation programmes, promoted tourism and run business seminars. A major planning exercise is currently under way, following which we plan a great expansion of our Geopark activities. This will be possible because the Geopark has recently moved up a gear with the recruitment of two new full time staff – effectively quadrupling the staff effort being devoted to Geopark activities.

1.3.2.3 Dynamic Nature of SP Project Work – Changes through Time. Neither SP nor its project activities are static, then: our activities in these project areas are responsive to change. NFS has been running since 1999, but WfF is relatively new as an SP project. Geopark is just three years old; and some project activities once carried out by SP, have now ceased. The key point is that SP has the flexibility to see new opportunities and take them – and this entails recognising when an activity can be completed, or handed on to other to continue.

## **1.4 Sutherland Partnership and LEADER**

### **1.4.1 Scope and Potential Involvement in LEADER (advising, enabling, delivering)**

The overarching aim of Sutherland Partnership is to promote development in Sutherland – an aim given recently-added impetus by the Single Outcome Agreement’s demand for evidence of increased growth in Highland communities. This development must be soundly-based, sustainable, and in harmony with Sutherland’s outstanding landscapes and biodiversity. It should seek to harness, encourage and grow the existing dynamism and entrepreneurship of Sutherland’s people. We now know the full scale of the Highland LEADER and Convergence Funding programme<sup>3</sup>, and it is very clear that this new funding stream offers great possibilities to promote such development. Whilst it is of paramount importance that LEADER be a valuable resource to help Sutherland COMMUNITIES to progress their own plans and projects, the Sutherland Partnership Board believes that the existing components and mechanisms of Sutherland Partnership can provide a proven organisational underpinning to achieve this.

1.4.1.1 SP Thematic Sub-Groups – a model for creation of the Sutherland Local Area Partnership. Sutherland Partnership already has extensive networks within Sutherland’s communities and thematic groups. It has a well-developed administrative, organisational and secretarial capability, and, as explained above, also does much of its work through thematic sub-groups. SP could deliver as the new Local Area Partnership (LAP) for Sutherland in a manner similar to that by which it already delivers through its existing subgroups in other spheres but with the added feature of at least 50% community representation on the LAP.

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<sup>3</sup> The LEADER Programme Award is £14.26m, (LEADER £6.76m and Convergence £7.5m) LEADER grant rate for year 1 is 40% (or a higher rate of 45% if 45% of public match funding is provided.) Total Sutherland award for the years to 2013 is £1,024,957.

1.4.1.2 SP's LEADER-derived Tasks, and Evidence for SP's Ability to Discharge Them. Whilst responsibility for administration of the LEADER programme rests with the recently recruited LEADER Development Officer for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, Sutherland Partnership is very well-equipped to act as the LAP for Sutherland, and to assist the Development Officer by:

- advising groups on possible LEADER-funded activities;
- supporting them to articulate their case in a way which aligns with LEADER criteria;
- supporting them through project delivery so that all LEADER funding is able to be drawn down through the life of the project.

SP has already carried out tasks like this. For example SP stewarded sixteen biodiversity projects through the SP Biodiversity Group (SPBG). The SPBG:

- advised potential applicants on project approval criteria;
- considered the resultant project bids;
- selected and approved them for funding (partly from LEADER+);
- and took a close interest in their delivery (often with one nominated SPBG member, a specialist in that particular field, leading on advice to, and supervision of, any particular project.)

1.4.1.3 Suggested Composition of the Sutherland LAP. The LAP is envisaged as a new subgroup of the Sutherland Partnership Board, with members specially selected for their expertise and with strong community input springing from community representation of at least 50%. Since SP subgroups already cover community issues in Sutherland, it is proposed that at least one delegate should be nominated from each subgroup – and this representation will bring with it the necessary expertise in the issues of community development, transport, tourism and biodiversity. A suggested LAP membership is as follows.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>REPRESENTING (Agency / Community Group)</b>	<b>SUTHERLAND PARTNERSHIP FORUM(S)<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>
<b>Voting Members</b>				
Robbie Rowantree (Chair)	Highland Council / Sutherland Partnership Chairman	Board.	Agency	
Anne Sutherland (sub. G. Jack)	Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Board, SPTF, SPTG, NFSMG	Agency	
Ian Mitchell	Scottish Natural Heritage	SPBG, SPTF	Agency	
Esther Dickinson	NHS Highland	Board	Agency	
Linda Munro	Highland Council / Childcare & Fam'y Res'ce P'ship	Board	Agency	
Ronnie Lansley	CVS North	Board, SPCDF, GeoSG, SPTF, SPTG		Community
Scott Armstrong	VisitScotland	SPTF	Agency	
Jim McGillivray	Highland Council / Embo Trust / Sutherland Ag. Soc.	Board	Agency	
Ian Ross	Highland Council	Board, SPTG	Agency	
George Farlow	Highland Council	Board, GeoSG	Agency	
Deirdre Mackay	Highland Council	Board, SPCDF, NFSMG	Agency	
Barbara Watson	Sutherland Learning Centre Network	SPCDF		Community
Ann Keatinge	Voluntary Groups East Sutherland	Board, SPCDF, SPTG		Community
Durrant Macleod	North Highland Tourism	SPTF, SPTG		Community
Ian Smith	North West Community Bus Ass.	None		Community
Steve Robertson	North Highland Forest Trust	SPBG		Community
Kenny Graham	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	SPBG		Community
Frances Gunn	Federation of Nth Community Councils	Board, SPCDF, SPTF, SPTG		Community
Alasdair Wood	West Coast Community Councils	GeoSG		Community
Caroline Munro	Central Sutherland Community Councils	None		Community
tbc	East Suth'd & Edderton Community Councils (North)	None		Community
Allan Barclay	East Suth'd & Edderton Community Councils (South)	None		Community
June McAuliffe	Falls of Shin Visitor Centre	SPTF		Community
			Total 10	Total 13
<b>Advisory Members</b>				
William Sutherland	Sutherland Partnership	All		n/a
Phil Tomalin	Highland Council	Board, SPCDF, SPTF, SPTG, NFSMG		n/a
Andy Mackay	Highland Council	Board, SPCDF, GeoSG, SPTF, SPTG, NFSMG		n/a
Fiona Cameron	Highland LEADER – Development Officer C,S & ER	None		n/a

<sup>4</sup> Key: SPBG = Biodiversity Group; SPCDF = Community Development Forum; SPTF = Tourism Forum; SPTG = Transport Group; GeoSG = Geopark Steering Group; NFSMG = New Futures Sutherland Management Group.

A final LAP size of some 23 members is proposed, but there are no hard and fast limits on numbers of representatives. It will be important to ensure a balance between membership from North, West, Central and East Sutherland. Our consultations on this Development have suggested that Community Councils are well thought of as a source of LAP members, and the LAP membership list above reflects that.

1.4.1.4 Periodicity and Methodology of Sutherland LAP. The Sutherland LAP's meetings will be scheduled at regular intervals in accordance with the need to approve applications promptly. To begin with, it is intended that meetings will be scheduled three-monthly. If the level of interest warrants it, the frequency of the meetings could be increased. If levels of interest and numbers of applications are lower than expected, or if application approval proves straightforward and uncontroversial, it may be possible to decrease the frequency of meetings, or to secure LAP endorsement of applications out of committee, by Email agreement.

#### **1.4.2 Capacity and Resourcing Issues for LEADER delivery by SP.**

1.4.2.1 Sutherland Partnership Existing Capacity, and its Resourcing Requirements. As demonstrated above, with ten years in existence and a proven track record in delivering worthwhile outputs, SP has the capacity, and is well equipped, to perform as Sutherland's LEADER LAP, without recruiting additional manpower.

1.4.2.2 Adjustments to SP Tasking and Workload. The advent of LEADER-related tasking will necessitate changes in the way SP runs some of its business, and we are beginning the process of task shedding to free up sufficient SP Manager hours. Whilst the SP Manager currently acts as secretary of all SP meetings except the SP Biodiversity Group, this will change: henceforth he will service only the SP Board itself, and the new LEADER LAP. Secretaryship of all other forums will be carried out, in rotation, by other SP forum members as agreed.

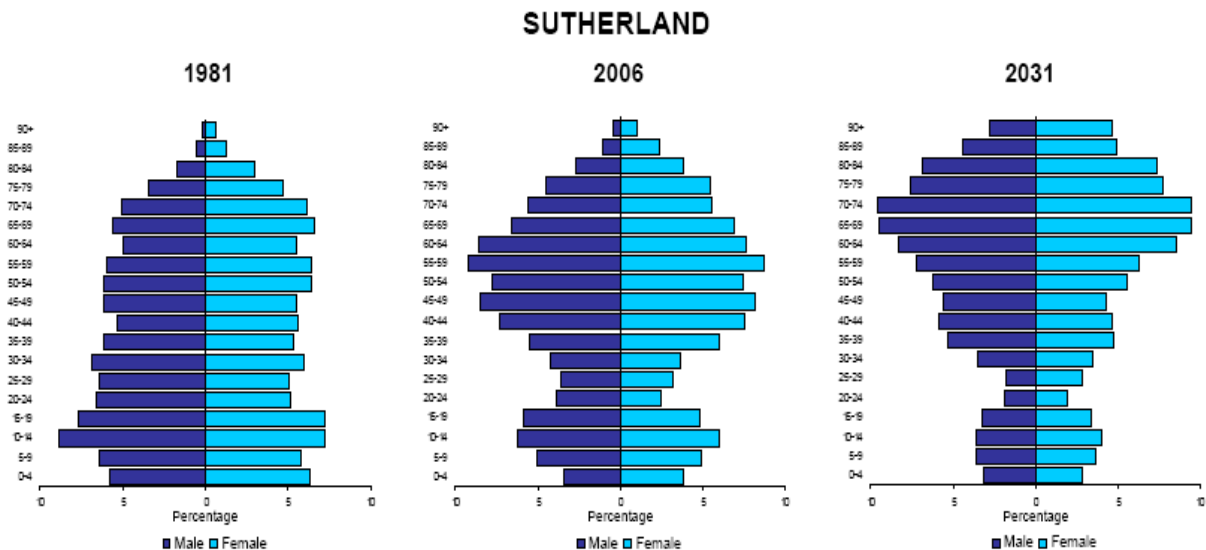
## Part 2. Needs, Opportunities and Characteristics of Sutherland.

### 2.1 Characteristics and needs of Sutherland

#### 2.1.1 Population

The population of Sutherland is 13,524, representing 6% of the population of Highland and 0.25% of the population of Scotland. Sutherland's area of 6,376sq km is roughly one quarter of the area of Highland and 8% of the area of the whole of Scotland. Sutherland is a sparsely populated area with the population density being slightly over one person per sq km in the north west, putting it amongst the most sparsely populated areas in Europe.

The population whilst not declining is rapidly ageing. Whilst we would stress that many older members of the local population are active and forward-looking, and much is already being done to enhance the quality of life of elderly people<sup>5</sup>, there are risks and demands on services springing from the fact that the proportion of the Sutherland population over 65 is 32% - double the figure of 16% for Scotland as a whole. The population age profiles below clearly demonstrate the trend:



Source: Highland Council based on GROS

This puts extra emphasis on catering for the needs of young people. Much is already being done, with a strong youth voice and much effort devoted to providing amenities for local and visiting young people. But more needs to be done.

#### 2.1.2 Economy and Employment

The economy of Sutherland is dominated by the public sector and tourism. Agriculture fisheries and forestry are important particularly in north west and central Sutherland where almost 8% work in the sector. The private sector is dominated by micro businesses.

There is a strong, independent streak in Sutherland's employment pattern: of the 13,524 population of Sutherland, 5000 (source Annual Business Inquiry 2006, rounded to nearest

<sup>5</sup> For example Assynt and Tongue O4O project, economic impact study to keep older people in the area, lunch clubs, interconnections between villages through daycare, Back to the Future, Your Past Their Future.

100) are in employment. Of these, 21% are self employed, compared with 15% in Highland and 10% in Scotland.

There are only a handful of major employers in Sutherland, most of whom are public sector including Highland Council, NHS Highland, HIE, SNH and Forestry Commission all of whom have, or will have, their bases in Golspie. In addition, Highland Council has locally significant centres of employment throughout the area at schools, social services facilities and TECS depots. Public admin, education and health comprise a significant proportion of all jobs (39% in NW&C Sutherland and 37% in East Sutherland Source (ABI 2006))

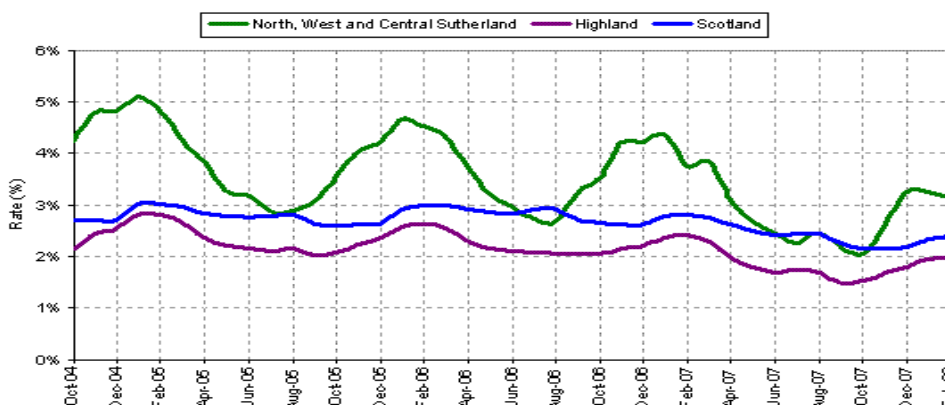
Major private sector employers include Skibo Castle (180 employees) Essentia (80 employees) and in the north west the largest employer is Loch Duart (40 employees). Harbours in Lochinver and Kinlochbervie also act as centres of employment. Dounreay, although located in Caithness, is a major employer of people living in north Sutherland.

Social Enterprise – which may be defined as commercial activities carried out by community groups for communities – is also strong here, with a wide range of such enterprises already in being. Paragraph 2.2.7 below gives the detail, and suggests how LEADER can play its part in developing this small-scale spirit of enterprise.

The voluntary sector is a significant source of employment in Sutherland. In East Sutherland in 2004 there were 148 part-time employees and 54 full time employees<sup>6</sup>.

Forestry and agriculture are an important sector, (particularly in NW&C Sutherland where 7.9% of employed people work in this sector (ABI 2006)) although much of the agricultural employment is crofting which is self employed and often part time and supplemented by a second income. Tourism is also an important sector, but is seasonal (see graph showing seasonal variation in Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants for North West and Central Sutherland), low paid and often requires working shift patterns. Income from tourists also supports local services such as garages and retail outlets.

JSA claimants for North West and Central Sutherland<sup>7 8</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Source: Voluntary Groups East Sutherland Mapping Survey.

<sup>7</sup> Source: HC Ward Profile<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Average annual household incomes (NW&C Sutherland £27,982, E Sutherland £26,778) are lower than Highland (£30,570) and Scotland (£31,406) averages, further compounded by higher prices for transport, goods and services. Source CACI Paycheck 2006

### **2.1.3 Deprivation /**

Multiple deprivation, as measured by SIMD, accounts for a range of deprivation factors including employment, income, housing, education, health, crime and access to services. Whilst none of the datazones (each covering approx 700- 800 residents) in Sutherland is identified as severely deprived i.e. in the 15% most deprived datazones in Scotland, the SIMD is poor at identifying the isolated deprivation found in sparsely populated rural areas. The fact that Helmsdale and Brora in particular score highly in SIMD, despite the statistical effect of the measure on small populations, identifies these two areas as centres of deprivation. It is clear that there are other areas where deprivation in Sutherland remains hidden due to a wide range of incomes etc which statistically “average out” deprivation. Kyle of Sutherland is a good example of this, particularly Bonar Bridge which was identified and visited by a UK Parliamentary Commission in 2007 investigating rural income deprivation. Furthermore, Scottish Executive Rural Service Priority Areas programme identified Melvich and Helmsdale as areas disadvantaged by the difficulty in accessing services.

Housing is more expensive than the average for Highland and Scotland, particularly in NW and Central Sutherland where over 18% of houses are second / holiday homes (compared with 6% for Highland and 1% for Scotland). Of 165 new homes with either planning permission or identified in the Local Plan 101 are constrained by water supply or sewage infrastructure. Rates of private ownership, renting from social landlord (inc. HC) and private landlord broadly reflect those of Highland and Scotland as a whole.

Another measure of deprivation is the Highland Council developed fragile areas indicator based on 7 indicators reflecting population density, population decline, unemployment and income and distance to local and regional services. In this respect there is a marked imbalance between the two Highland Council Wards comprising Sutherland, with geography and demographics making the north and west of the county much more vulnerable. LEADER administrative arrangements will need to take account of the fact that most of Sutherland outside the east coast area (i.e. away from the east coast towns and the A9) scores highly on this indicator.

### **2.1.4 Access to services**

In a sparsely populated areas such as Sutherland the unit cost of providing essential public services such as health, care for the elderly, waste management and education is higher due to the transport costs and travelling time. The same applies to the private sector and is reflected in less choice and higher prices for products and services. The voluntary sector plays a significant role in providing services.

Against this background access to transport assumes greater significance. Private transport is essential rather than a luxury. Sutherland Partnership recently produced a Transport Vision for Sutherland which underlined the role of transport in supporting successful rural communities. The document identified a range of transport issues for Sutherland including infrastructural (e.g. road improvements) and service improvements including the need for flexible local on demand services for all areas and the importance of transport for social purposes as well access to employment and essential services. Rising fuel prices and a diminishing network of filling stations are further pressuring commercial operations and the private motorist.

### **2.1.5 Summary**

In summary, the key issues facing Sutherland are:

- declining and ageing population
- the need to promote opportunities for young people
- significant levels of deprivation, much of which is hidden from policy makers and resources to address that deprivation
- seasonal and low wage employment combined with high reliance on public sector jobs
- extremely sparse population presenting a significant obstacle to providing and accessing essential services

## **2.2 Opportunities for Sutherland**

Sutherland faces significant social and structural issues, to which, increasingly, are added logistical ones caused by the rising cost of fuel. Nevertheless, it has a number of strengths which, with support, can develop further. Sutherland has a vibrant and wide reaching voluntary sector, with communities and groups often providing solutions to local difficulties through volunteer effort and with minimal external support.

The LEADER programme promises to fit extremely well in Sutherland. LEADER funding is likely to be invaluable to help tackle the issues identified above; and Sutherland's people have the ambition, dynamism and ability to harness LEADER funding to best effect. Evidence is that Sutherland's requirements will harmonise well with LEADER's seven **Priority Themes. They are:**

- Culture and Heritage
- Learning Opportunities
- Access to Facilities, Activities and Services
- Land, Environment and the Countryside
- Renewables
- Tourism
- Social Enterprise and Micro-businesses

According to inputs we have received so far, the following opportunities are evident in Sutherland under the priority themes listed above. Please read in conjunction with Annex C – a list of those Sutherland project proposals which have been drawn to our attention so far.

### **2.2.1 Culture and Heritage**

Sutherland's communities start with major archaeological and historical assets – historic monuments, castles, historic sites with links to the Highland Clearances, and so on. No wonder, then, that culture and heritage are so important to Sutherland's people, and offer so many opportunities for development through LEADER.

Sutherland has a range of visitor centres and museums. Two of these (Brora Heritage Centre and Ferrycroft Visitor Centre, Lairg) are run by The Highland Council. Independent museums include Timespan In Helmsdale, History Links in Dornoch, Strathnaver Museum and Dunrobin Castle Museum. Three of the above are Registered/Accredited museums. Timespan is also an arts centre with a gallery, workshop space and a residency programme.

There is a network of voluntary local arts promoters: (Established) Rosehall, Clashmore Lochinver; (New), Edderton; (Occasional) Durness, Skerray. Promoters generally receive support from the Highland Council towards their annual programme. Dornoch Cathedral hosts occasional concerts.

The literary arts are strong in Sutherland, with creative writing classes offered and with two writers' groups in being.

A wide range of community projects (60+), receive both capital and revenue from Highland Council. Projects embracing arts, heritage, sports, environment and science ran throughout the area in 2007, as part of the Highland Year of Culture<sup>9</sup>. The Highland 2007 Legacy Fund announced by the Highland Council will serve to continue this momentum.

Brora Learning Centre, run by The Highland Council, is active in running arts projects for teenagers and adults and has invested in musical and film-making equipment. There are libraries in Dornoch, Golspie, Helmsdale, Bettyhill, Bonar Bridge and Brora, which is also a Cultural Centre hosting local heritage exhibitions. There is as a mobile library service.

A Cultural Coordinator for schools, based in Tain, covers ILCs (Integrated Learning Communities) in S E Sutherland; a counterpart, who is based in Wick, covers NW Sutherland.

There is a very lively local music scene, which features traditional music particularly strongly and involves young and old alike. In the area are three fèisean, two of which are well established: Fèis Chataibh and Fèis air on Oir. A new one Fèis a Chaolais commenced in 2008. Taigh na Gàidhlig Mhealanais runs classes and cultural projects, and a summer school. Much is happening on the cultural scene in Sutherland, and this is an area with marked potential for development.

Visual Arts Sutherland is an active association of professional artists and craftspeople; they organise a Studio Tour and have an excellent website [www.visualartssutherland.com](http://www.visualartssutherland.com). Balnakeil Craft Village accommodates an active group of craftspeople. There are many other active arts and cultural groups. However many small communities are faced with lack of resources and opportunities especially for teenagers and young adults.

## **2.2.2 Learning Opportunities**

**2.2.2.1 Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education.** There is a strong learning tradition in Sutherland, which begins with playgroups, childcare and nursery services, and continues with its network of eighteen primary schools. Sutherland also now has four secondary schools, with Dornoch Academy and Golspie High School serving the East, and Farr High School and Kinlochbervie High School serving the north and west respectively. Until now, school leavers wishing to move into further or higher education had little choice but to leave the area, but improved communication links now make day-running to study in Inverness much more feasible. More exciting still, North Highland College/UHI, with a campus in Dornoch, held its first degree-award ceremony within the last two years. What is more, NHC/UHI is expanding: a second Dornoch campus will shortly open up on a former hotel site, and will concentrate on studies in hospitality management and Scottish history. These developments have particular promise, because they offer opportunities for young natives of the county to remain here while they study to an advanced level; and they also offer the possibility of attracting young people to the area from elsewhere.

**2.2.2.2. Adult Learning Opportunities.** The main providers of adult learning opportunities in Sutherland are Highland Council Community Learning and Development (CLD), North Highland College (NHC) and the learning centres based at Brora, Lairg, Kinlochbervie and Lochinver.

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<sup>9</sup> Examples of community based heritage initiatives include the public garden at GREAN (Golspie), The Summer Walkers project, a residency at Strathnaver Museum, Armadale and Strathy Local Studies Group, Historic Assynt, ,

Through CLD a range of non-vocational adult classes is offered in communities throughout Sutherland either directly or through COBALT (Community Based Adult Learning and Training) groups. These classes held in schools, village halls, community centres and learning centres both ensure local provision and meet community demand through consultation and evaluation. Adult Basic Education (ABE), a CLD service, provides basic skills training and elementary English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) through a Sutherland-wide network of volunteer tutors.

NHC offers adult evening classes and ESOL courses in Dornoch as well as Information Technology classes in outreach centres. Through NHC and North West Training Centre, Kinlochbervie, ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence certificated by the British Computer Society) is widely available.

The learning centres also provide Information and Communications Technology/Basic Skills training working in partnership with the ABE service. An important part of the learning centres' provision is support and guidance for students setting out on long distance or campus based Further Education or Higher Education courses. The centres also run Employability Projects designed to help long term unemployed people through re-training and confidence building programmes. They offer Jobcentre Plus clients work placements, support in job seeking and training. Internet access, available at all centres, and video conferencing at Kinlochbervie are invaluable assets for local communities.

Voluntary sector activity in training and education is relatively high in Sutherland per head of population. Components include training for volunteers to manage community activities, for paid workers in the third sector in (for example) childcare, and training in various disciplines for those running voluntary organisations.

The main providers work together to increase the number and variety of learning opportunities in Sutherland. Local delivery of courses is essential given the remoteness of many communities, lack of public transport and the increasing cost of fuel for transport. As the learning centres increasingly fulfil their potential and play a decisive role in community building it is important that their sustainability be ensured through reliable funding streams.

**2.2.2.3 Learning Opportunities – Young People.** Highland Council CLD is also a key player in providing personal and social educational opportunities through its Youth Development Officers (YDOs) who are attached to each of the secondary schools. grant aids local voluntary youth groups, working closely with other agencies – including secondary schools – to target those young people who are most disadvantaged, and enable communication links between young people and their local communities. YDOs, working in partnership, also directly deliver a range of learning programmes, and sponsor the highly successful Sutherland Youth Forum and its various initiatives – a YouthBank, road safety training, and public transport projects.

The array of youth-related activities already taking place in Sutherland illustrates that the potential for further youth work is enormous. Especially in parts of the North and West, geography imposes particular difficulties in ensuring young people's participation in out-of-hours activities, and this could be a fruitful area for LEADER action. Many voluntary clubs have specifically involved young people and generally ensure that as many initiatives as possible engage with the youth of the area. Some examples are:

- the Alan Joyce Environmental Project in conjunction with Strathnaver Museum and SNH;
- the Ceannabeinne clearance village interpretation trail;

- the Mackay Country Summer Walkers Project;
- the Strathnaver Trail;
- Arnaboll;
- the Castle Varrich Timeline in conjunction with Strathnaver Museum;
- North Highland Forest Trust and Archaeological Week;
- Strathy Hall Music;
- the Feisan movement;
- Young Roots;
- Scotland Against Drugs events;
- Walk in Strathnaver;
- Your Past Their Future;
- World Youth Congress.

This strategy of involving youth gives young people a positive role which could be further advanced with sufficient funding towards arts and environmental projects to protect and raise awareness of the unique and fascinating area in which we live. This is important to the future of the area as it makes it more attractive for families to move up with young families when there is such a vibrant youth movement/culture thus reviving school roles and re-invigorating the villages.

Sutherland Youth Forum - the voice of young people – deserves enhancement, pre NEET and 16+ learning choices should be expanded, youth literacy needs support, and partnerships with agencies and communities to engage with youngsters need development. Much youth-related activity is already taking place in Sutherland and the potential of LEADER is enormous.

### **2.2.3 Access to Facilities, Activities and Services**

The health and wellbeing of the people of a rural area like Sutherland area are critically important, and vulnerable in the event of a lack of funding. Some critical areas are as follows.

2.2.3.1 Leisure Facilities. Sutherland Swimming pool in Golspie has been recently reopened following a 2-year closure for refurbishment and upgrading and has an annual throughput in excess of 30,000 users.

Sutherland also has two independent leisure facilities – the North Coast Leisure Centre, Bettyhill, and the Assynt Learning and Leisure Centre. Both have receive Highland Council grant funding in the past, and, with the right funding, both have potential to deliver enhanced benefits in the future.

2.2.3.2. Village Halls. Village halls are a vital resource, which can aid communities not just in practical ways, but also in the sense of fostering community spirit and a sense of local identity. The area has a large number of independent Village Halls which are supported through the Highland Councils CLL grant scheme (currently £1,000 per year.) The standard of these important community facilities varies greatly, however, and there is great potential for improvement. Sutherland Partnership has held “Village Hall Summits” in the past, and CVS North has recently held such an event.

2.2.3.3. Other Facilities. Other facilities which deliver vital community benefits and which could benefit from enhanced funding include the following.

- Community information resources e.g. VG-ES and CVS North Resource Centres,
- Childcare provision which is affordable, e.g. Garfields, Allsorts, Farr Edge
- Daycare provision, e.g. Bradbury Centre

- Activities aimed at young people, e.g. youth groups and youth clubs
- Sports facilities and pitches, play parks and community gardens
- Recycling projects, e.g. GREAN, BEAG
- Community transport initiatives
- Counselling projects, e.g. CRUSE and Alcohol Counselling
- Support services, e.g. Women's Aid
- Ranger Services offering a range of outdoor activities for all ages and abilities

#### **2.2.4 – Land, Environment and Access to the Countryside.**

Sutherland has outstanding riches of scenery, geology and biodiversity. Sutherland's unique and spectacular landscape has memorable mountains, forest and coastal walks, a wide range of inland water (including rivers with potential for white-water canoeing) and an underground cave system of national importance in the Inchnadamph/Elphin area.

Much is already done to harness this resource – the work of North Highlands Tourism and the North West Highlands Geopark are cases in point - but there is potential to do more, and supporting and encouraging partnerships between state, private and third (voluntary) sectors will be vital. A Sutherland Core Path Network is in place, and an East Sutherland Woodland Regional Park (in course of creation) has great potential. Mountain biking is a growth area of huge promise, and there is also potential to develop multi-day trips by Canadian canoe with sections of portage between inland lochs and rivers to give access through extensive areas of wild country: there is evidence of repressed demand for canoeing activities in particular, and there is local expertise available to help harness and develop this.

Some specific opportunities, from a very long list, are as follows.

- Further development of 'Wildlife' and 'green' tourism (over 75% of visitors say they come for this!)
- Opportunity for holding an Environmental Festival or environmental events
- Opportunities for further promotion of the natural heritage of the area
- Improved visitor facilities and interpretation - including remote viewing opportunities
- Environmental education facilities for locals & visitors, perhaps including a Geopark-based education facility which could be sited in Durness Visitor Centre.
- Supporting cultural and environmental projects which give an area a "sense of place", e.g Mackay Country project.
- Training on all aspects of local natural heritage for local people/communities so each is an ambassador for the area
- Habitat improvement & restoration e.g. Native woodlands, peatland restoration projects
- Development of new land management skills – modern ways to traditionally manage the landscape. This should take an integrated approach – e.g. through catchment management / deer management projects
- National Nature Reserves and special places for nature
- European status of many protected areas and species - may be useful in attracting European funding
- Peatlands project may attract funding and other resources
- Marketing of local produce from a high quality environment
- Low intensity agricultural demonstration projects
- Integrated approach to land management e.g. Outdoor recreation
- Increased recreation facilities and events e.g. footpaths - some themed and with integrated interpretation – and sporting/outdoor events like the Cape Wrath Challenge

### **2.2.5 Renewables**

Sutherland has some of the best opportunities for development of renewables in Scotland. It has high wind speeds for on-shore wind, high rainfall figures especially in the West for hydro projects, a plentiful supply of woody biomass with a well developed timber harvesting and supply chain and owing to the longer heating season and longer days good opportunities for solar thermal development. In time there are also likely to be opportunities for tidal energy. Additionally given the distances between settlements and (quite often) their more isolated nature there are opportunities for more decentralised solutions which in turn can provide communities with increased energy security and control over their own energy supplies.

It would seem that future challenges to the area will include rising energy costs both for heating and electricity as well as transport. Therefore community-led renewable energy projects that focus on these issues will go some way to alleviating some of the pressure likely to be experienced by community facilities like village halls, community centres, voluntary groups and others. The development of community-led renewable energy income generating projects like small on-onshore wind farms or hydro projects like those on Gigha or Westray could provide a source of core income for groups to fund their own community-led infrastructure projects. In this way communities can become more self-reliant and, in time, less dependent on external grant programmes for their priority projects. There are exciting possibilities here, but it will be important to look at each case individually to achieve the best outcomes. Community-led projects have much promise because they allow groups to decide their own outcomes and timescales. Income generation is a distinct possibility – as long as there is a fair market for grid connections.

### **2.2.6 Tourism**

There are a number of issues affecting tourism in the Highlands and these can be even more marked in the peripheral areas including Sutherland. This includes seasonality and distance from main markets / centres of population - factors which limit opportunities to take advantage of the growth in domestic short break trips. Whilst marketing can help address these issues on a short term basis it is vital that the quality of visitor experience be such that visitors will wish to return and become ambassadors for Sutherland. To satisfy the demands of an increasingly discerning tourism market it is essential that investment be made in the Sutherland tourism product in line with customer expectations. Community organised events are already strong in Sutherland<sup>10</sup>. In addition to providing a boost to community spirit, also have marked potential tourism benefit, and many may merit support and enhancement<sup>11</sup>.

Priorities for supporting tourism should focus on tackling the issues of seasonality, improving the customer experience, and developing the tourism infrastructure that will make Sutherland a more appealing destination for a longer stay. Sutherland's strengths in landscape and biodiversity are highlighted at paragraph 2.2.4 above, and it will be particularly important to develop infrastructure to cater for the wildlife/outdoor/cultural tourism market, including for disabled visitors.

Recognising the fragility of many services in the more peripheral areas, focus should also be given to initiatives that both provide a service for visitors and help sustain a service that assists the wellbeing of the local community.

### **2.2.7 Social Enterprise and Micro-businesses.**

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<sup>10</sup> Galas (Lairg, Dornoch, Lochinver etc); Highland Games; crofters' shows; fishing competitions; music festivals; cycling events; Ranger-guided walks; car rallies

<sup>11</sup> Potential developments include cycling, sailing, surfing, and walking events.

At August's N,W&C Ward Forum, Nicola Welsh of the Social Enterprise Academy explained the growing importance of social enterprise in North Scotland (currently over 1,000 social enterprise companies in the Highlands with an approximate turnover of £1.25b) and its potential for further expansion. In Sutherland such social enterprise is vigorous and thriving. The Golspie Recycling and Environmental Action Network (GREAN) is a model of its kind, widely used, expanding (now well beyond Golspie) and well respected. Also in East Sutherland, the East Sutherland Producers and Dornoch Farmers' Market runs monthly farmers' markets at which a wide range of locally-sourced produce is sold. The ESP&DFM's vision for the future includes expanding its markets and developing its producer skill base through training. In Sutherland's North, West and Central Ward there is a range of community-based employment activity:

- Local producers groups such as Foodlink;
- Social Enterprises, such as community woodland groups, e.g. North Sutherland Community Forest Trust, Norcelt. Durness Development Group, Mackay Country Community Trust Limited, Kinlochbervie Development Group;
- Recycling projects, such as Homeaid;
- Community Enterprises, such as Cape Wrath Challenge and the Assynt Crofters Trust, which have demonstrated the power of social enterprise to energise communities.

Sutherland's track record in generating and promoting social enterprise suggests that LEADER will have a particularly role to play in building on community enterprises.

## **Part 3 – Community Engagement.**

### **3.1 What Part 3 of this Document Does.**

This part of the document describes Sutherland Partnership's consultation processes with the communities it serves, thereby proving SP's fitness to serve as the LEADER Local Area Partnership. It falls into two sections.

- Section 3.2 outlines SP's track record in its engagement with organisations and communities in Sutherland;
- Section 3.3 describes how SP's engagement processes will be adapted and harnessed to LEADER LAP purposes.

### **3.2 SP's Record of Community Engagement.**

SP has an excellent record, in the ten years of its existence, in consulting with communities and so identifying what the key issues for local people are. SP's very existence denotes a wish to help move from a representational model of local democracy organisation to a more participative model, in which communities have organised and tailored opportunities to have a say in the facilities which are provided for them. The following paragraphs describe the particular tools SP has used to promote this engagement process.

3.2.1 Strong historic community representation on SP forums. Part 1.3.1 above describes the key role played in SP work by SP thematic sub-groups. Community participation in these groups is a vital factor in their success, and demonstrates that community engagement works. It does this by bringing to the table the issues which are important to our communities, and giving SP the evidence to channel our community planning efforts and support our lobbying of elected representatives and others. It can also give opportunities for community representatives to have access to senior opinion-formers. Such a case was when the Chief Executive of VisitScotland.com, Marco Truffelli, addressed an expanded-membership meeting of SP Tourism Forum, so giving a packed meeting of tourism trade members a rare opportunity for face-to-face contact with the leader of an organisation vital to their success.

3.2.2 National Standards for Community Engagement. NSFCE is an important document which has been used extensively by SP staff to guide their community engagement efforts. Awareness of NSFCE in SP has been high since the SP Manager attended the training course on NSFCE run by HC in Inverness. SP Manager in turn briefed the SP Board on the main features and the usefulness of NSFCE, and distributed informative material. Following that, SP ran a training course in NSFCE (for community and other agency representatives) in conjunction with Caithness Partnership and the Carnegie Trust. SP is committed to the regular use of NSFCE guidance in our work.

3.2.3 High Local Media Profiles. SP has a policy of keeping community planning in the public eye by producing regular and frequent press releases on current issues. This necessitates close liaison with community representatives and also, in turn, triggers community responses. This summer's examples (within a single month recently) are: coverage of the Sutherland Partnership AGM; of a community works project in Helmsdale carried out by HMS SUTHERLAND personnel and organised by Sutherland Partnership; and of SP pressure and lobbying being applied on the subject of high fuel prices.

3.2.4 Sutherland Partnership Website & CD. [www.sutherlandpartnership.org.uk](http://www.sutherlandpartnership.org.uk) was set up three years ago – and now runs to over 40 pages. It covers a wide range of SP topics, and provides links to community and local business websites. Importantly, it also provides a means by which correspondents can make direct contact with SP staff on any topic they wish. A CD was produced which links into the new website, so providing a visually-attractive and “tactile” introduction to the website.

3.2.5 SurveyMonkey. Our partner organisation Voluntary Groups East Sutherland is a member of this online survey website. SurveyMonkey constitutes a very useful addition to our arsenal, and looks set to strengthen still further our communications with communities. Using the large address databases of our voluntary sector Partnership organisations (VGES and CVS North) we are able to compile and distribute online questionnaires with which to gauge community views on a range of issues. Completed questionnaires are returned to the SurveyMonkey website, from where they are accessible to VGES staff. SurveyMonkey is not the whole answer on community consultations (online communities are not a wholly representative group) but it does provide a feedback mechanism which is rapid and reliable.

3.2.6 Presentations to Community Councils. There are no fewer than seventeen Community Councils across the two Sutherland council wards, and the Sutherland Partnership Manager routinely takes them the message about the Partnership’s work to community council meetings. His presentations generally trigger a lively question-and-answer session, and so bring about an useful two-way exchange of views on a wide range of issues. The process is ongoing, and not complete. Having in the past written all Community Councils offering a presentation, the Sutherland Partnership Manager plans to reissue the offer shortly.

3.2.7 Ward Forums. The new ward system in Highland Council is relatively recent, having been introduced in 2007. SP is frequently involved in these new forums, in both the new Sutherland wards, east and west. Imaginative use of these forums – such as the recent North and West Sutherland Ward Forum with a “social enterprise” theme – can permit proactive development of community planning themes and issues. We plan to use them as such – see section 3.3 below.

3.2.8 Some Other Current or Recent Examples of SP Consultation with Communities. The following recent examples are worthy of note.

- Educational SP’s Geopark project, through its outreach in schools, recruited four young people to attend the recent European Geopark Network event in Osnabrück, Germany.
- International Benchmarking. SP recently participated in a visit by a party of ladies from the Rhön biosphere reserve in Germany, with a view to learning lessons for the purposes of microbusiness promotion in our Geopark.
- Maximising Benefit from Affiliated Links with HMS SUTHERLAND. SP is the link organisation promoting Sutherland’s affiliation with our namesake warship. SP has organised two visits within the last nine months. In the first, a team of ship’s officers made a liaison visit and presentation to Farr High School, and were guests at a reception for Sutherland community representatives. In the second visit, a work party from the ship spent several days carrying out renovation and improvement of a footpath near Helmsdale. This project was selected following consultation with communities, and was carried out with guidance from Helmsdale Community Council. It was highly successful.
- Health Promotion. In mid 2007 SP organised and hosted a one-day event on the theme “Health Improvement.” This enabled Sutherland’s health priorities to

be identified, and used as the basis for the creation of a new Sutherland Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). The SHIP, in turn, has led to the creation of a Health Activity Group, whose work has included creation of a “Healthy Activities” database for Sutherland and efforts to expand the successful “Healthways” project into Sutherland. The SHIP’s outcomes have also included improved coordination between SP on the one hand (including the New Futures Sutherland project) and Sutherland’s existing Drug and Alcohol Forum and Mental Health Group on the other.

- Raising Geopark Profile. The Geopark’s purposes are to promote local tourism, encourage community cultural activity and strengthen tourism. To this end, the Seabridge consultants (who were engaged last year to chart the strategic way ahead for the Geopark) consulted widely with communities in forming their conclusions. Also, SP’s Geopark Officers, with partners, arrange a range of community events and they routinely attend North and West Sutherland local events and galas to help strengthen their local networks. The Geopark’s strong efforts to engage with Sutherland communities have also led to the production of Geopark information leaflets in Gaelic, as well as in a range of foreign languages.

Summary of the Current Position. Sutherland Partnership members therefore believe that we start with a strong background in liaising with communities as to what the key issues for Sutherland are. It is not so much a case of “refreshing” our close links with communities, but rather of maintaining previous efforts and methods, and taking careful aim at our targets for involvement in production of this LEADER Development Plan for Sutherland.

### **3.3 Use of Community Engagement in Development of our LEADER Development Plan**

As in all matters we have been paying close attention to ensuring that Sutherland’s communities are involved in having a say in Sutherland’s plans for LEADER-supported programmes. We have been doing this in two ways.

3.3.1 Giving Sutherland’s Communities the Opportunity to Participate. First, we have given Sutherland’s communities and thematic organisations the opportunity to view the draft Sutherland LEADER Development Plan, and to make their own inputs to it. This was achieved this by a range of means:

- Publicising August’s ward forums, both East and West, as meetings in which the new LEADER programme featured prominently. In addition, the North, West and Central Ward Forum were billed as a “Social Enterprise Opportunity” in which a range of means of energising the area was aired and discussed.
- Sending out a press release, in good time to include notice of the Ward Forums, covering all aspects of new LEADER and highlighting the opportunities for communities to participate;
- Sutherland Partnership Manager sending a personal Email to every community council in Sutherland, inviting participation in the community consultation on new LEADER. Where appropriate, he also made follow-up telephone calls
- Through Sutherland’s voluntary groups, east and west, sending Emails to every community contact on their databases (some 250 community contacts in all.) Both this Email and the one to Community Councils described (briefly) the new LEADER funding stream, stated the purpose of the Development Plan, and gave a clear invitation to community groups to participate, both by attendance at forthcoming meetings and by submitting written responses. To facilitate this, the Email enclosed a soft copy of the Sutherland LEADER Development Plan

(clearly labelled “draft”) and provided a link to an online response page which permitted rapid and easy feedback of community views.

### 3.3.2 Giving Sutherland’s Communities the Incentive and Confidence to Participate.

Secondly, we gave community representatives the incentive and confidence to submit their own project proposals for consideration under the LEADER programme.

We did this by:

- Involving subject matter experts in compilation of the draft Sutherland LEADER Development Plan, and making sure that their contributions were acknowledged – their names are well known among Sutherland’s communities, with the confidence that that inspires<sup>12</sup>.
- Nonetheless, stressing that community participation is a vital component of Sutherland’s stake in new LEADER – starting with the opportunity to contribute to the final Development Plan document.
- Being careful to mention, with emphasis, that Section 4 of this document – “Identified Opportunities for Development” – is “indicative only”. This stresses that the document, as promulgated, gives only some examples of current initiatives which might fit well with LEADER objectives. This list is not final or exclusive, and thus serves the purpose of giving communities examples of what they themselves might aspire to, and submit their own projects, perhaps in a spirit of friendly rivalry towards those projects contained in the draft!

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<sup>12</sup> The authors of this Development Plan gratefully acknowledge the support, advice and information provided by:

- Members of Sutherland Partnership Board and partner organisations;
- Subject Matter Experts: Nigel Brett Young, Adrian Clark, Matt Dent, Lawrence Jamieson, Ian Mitchell, Jon Priddy, Graeme Ross, Colin Simpson and Anne Sutherland.
- The Highland Council LEADER Programme Secretariat members: Nicola Ewing, Nicole Wallace, Debbie Maguire and Fiona Cameron;
- Vitally, community members who have provided inputs through questionnaires or by other means.

## **Part 4 – Community Engagement – Priorities for Funding**

### **The Seven LEADER Priority Themes - and Possible Types of Initiative/Project**

#### **Culture and Heritage**

- Visitor Centres/museums
- Arts promotion
- Community Arts projects
- Fèisean / local culture
- Events

#### **Learning Opportunities**

- Community based adult learning
- Youth learning opportunities
- Improving access to learning opportunities
- Youth projects, including national and local youth organisations
- Improving communication across the generations
- Maximising use of local talents and skills
- Training in capacity building

#### **Access to Facilities, Activities and Services**

- Village halls and community facilities (indoor and outdoor)
- Day care facilities for elderly and disabled people
- Sports facilities, including synthetic pitches
- Youth facilities and projects
- Community transport and community car schemes
- Counselling and support services
- Provision of allotments
- Improving access to local facilities

#### **Land Environment and the Countryside**

- Promotion and interpretation
- Environmental educational opportunities
- Skills and training
- Access and recreation facilities
- Local produce
- Habitat improvement, notably woodland

#### **Renewables**

- Renewable energy projects for community facilities
- Community renewable generation projects

#### **Tourism**

- Tourism infrastructure, including accommodation and tourist information areas
- Advertising and marketing of local tourism assets and activities
- Wildlife/outdoor/cultural tourism
- Projects to tackle seasonality

#### **Social Enterprise and Micro-businesses**

- Access to improved IT facilities e.g. community toolkit enhancement
- Access to training in business planning (e.g. for expansion)
- Support and promotion of locally-produced food
- Support for access to local community services

ANNEX A TO  
LEADER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SUTHERLAND

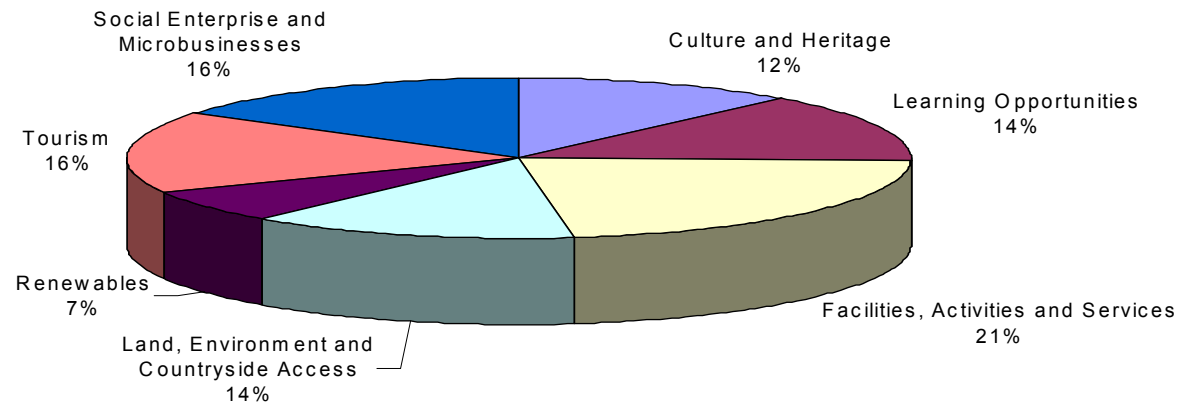
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABE	Adult Basic Education
CACI	An international Information, Statistical and Marketing Company
CLD	Community Learning and Development
COBALT	Community Based Adult Learning and Training
CRUSE	A bereavement counselling service
CVS North	Council for Voluntary Service (North)
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
ES&E	East Sutherland and Edderton (Highland Council Ward)
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESP&DFM	East Sutherland Producers and Dornoch Farmers' Market
GREAN	Golspie Recycling and Environmental Action Network
HC	Highland Council
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
JSA	Job Seeker's Allowance
LAG	Local Action Group (Highland-wide LEADER committee)
LAP	Local Area Partnership (lower-level LEADER committee)
LDP	LEADER Development Plan
LEADER	Liaison Entre Action De Development De L'Economie Rurale
NFS	New Futures Sutherland
NHC	North Highland College
NSFCE	National Standards for Community Engagement
NW&C	North, West and Central Sutherland (Highland Council Ward)
NWHG	North West Highlands Geopark
SHIP	Sutherland Health Improvement Plan
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SIP	Social Inclusion Partnership
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SOA	Single Outcome Agreement
SP	Sutherland Partnership
SPBG	Sutherland Partnership Biodiversity Group
SPCDF	Sutherland Partnership Community Development Forum
SPTF	Sutherland Partnership Tourism Forum
SPTG	Sutherland Partnership Transport Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VGES	Voluntary Groups East Sutherland
YDO	Youth Development Officer

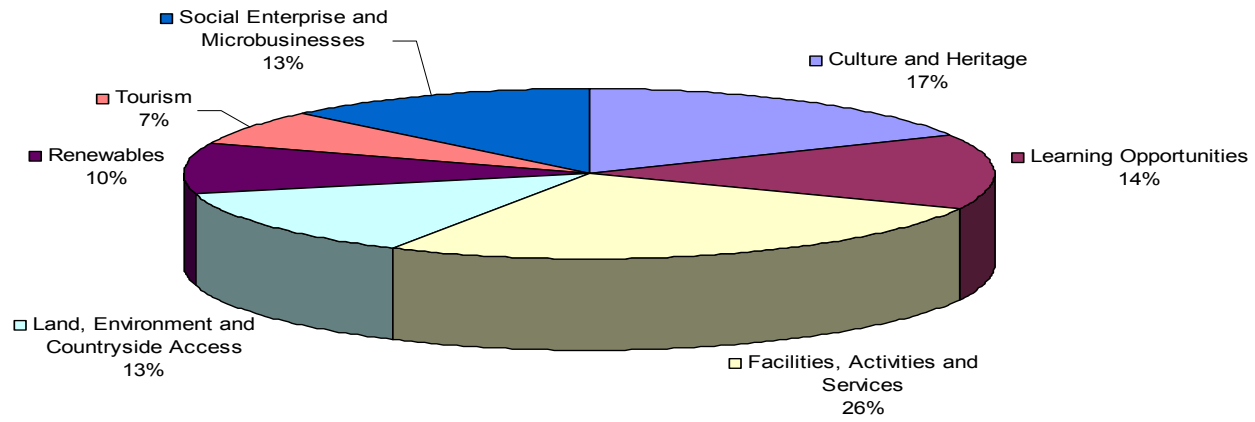
ANNEX B TO  
LEADER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SUTHERLAND

**OUTPUTS OF THE TWO SUTHERLAND WARD FORUM CONSULTATIONS, AND THE ENSUING WRITTEN CONSULTATION.**

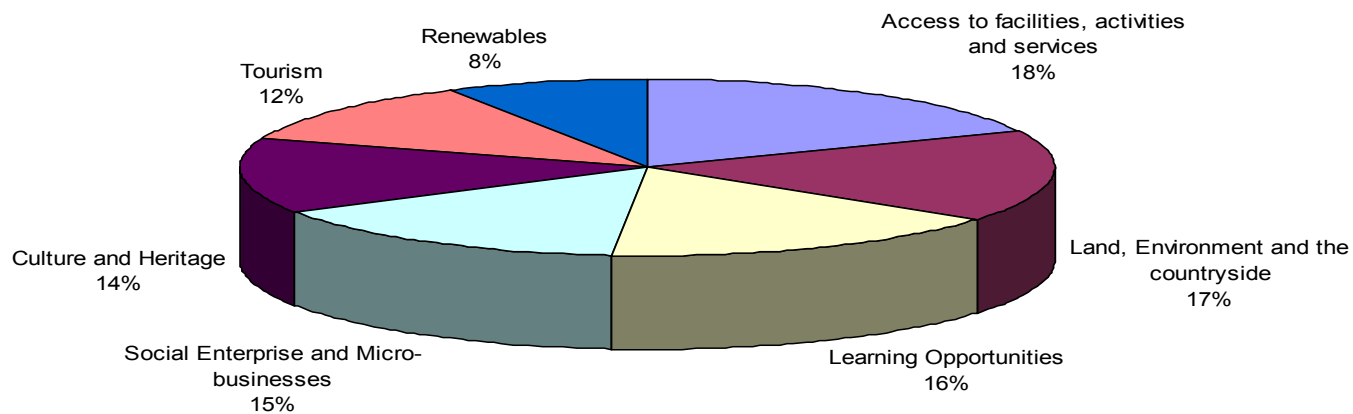
North, West and Central Ward Forum – Marks Awarded to LEADER Themes.



East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Forum – Marks Awarded to LEADER Themes.



Written Responses to LEADER Consultation – Marks Awarded to LEADER Themes



**Note: the relatively even spread of marks from all three consultations suggests that the LEADER themes are well chosen, and all attract good support. It is clear, however, that “Activities, Facilities and Services” (a category which includes village halls, for example) commands particularly strong support: it comes first in all three consultations.**

ANNEX C TO  
LEADER DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SUTHERLAND

**LIST OF POSSIBLE LEADER-FUNDED PROJECTS IN SUTHERLAND.**

**VERSION #1 DECEMBER 2008**

**IMPORTANT NOTE.** The publication of this list does not indicate or imply that projects listed are guaranteed LEADER funding – that will be a matter for Sutherland LAP or Highland LAG, as appropriate, to decide. This list merely gives an indication of the kinds of Sutherland project which have been drawn to LEADER attention so far. The existence of this list does not suggest, either, that projects listed below will receive preferential treatment, compared with other projects which may follow later in the programme.

	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Brief Description</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lead Organisation (underlined) / Key Partners</u>	<u>Total Projected Cost /LEADER Bid Amount</u>	<u>Match Funders / Amounts / Status</u>	<u>LEADER Theme Linkage(s)<sup>13</sup></u>
1	<b>Youth Scheme</b>	To create a North West Sutherland youth experience under the auspices of a social enterprise and establish a community youth exchange programme.	NW Sutherland	<u>CVS North</u>	£20,000 Total, of which £8000 LEADER	Lottery, Robertson Trust, Princes Trust	Social Enterprise
2	<b>Feis</b>	To promote Gaelic and musical heritage	North and west Sutherland	<u>Feis an Oir</u>	£25,000	tbc	Culture and Heritage
3	<b>Community heritage centre</b>	Renovation and developing a traditional heritage centre to house local memorabilia	Strathy & Armadale Heritage Group	Allt Beag Armadale Trust	£80,000	<u>Heritage lottery</u>	Culture and Heritage
4	<b>Strathnaver Museum Regeneration</b>	Complete refurbishment of Museum	Bettyhill	<u>Strathnaver Museum/ Mackay Country</u>	£750,000	Heritage Lottery, Historic Scotland and numerous others.	Culture and Heritage

<sup>13</sup> These are: Culture and Heritage; Training & Learning Opportunities; Activities, Facilities and Services; Land, Environment & Countryside Access; Renewables; Tourism; Social Enterprise & Microbusinesses.

6	<b>Alan Joyce Environmental Project</b>	Schools taking part in an environmental project promoting the value of our countryside.	Sutherland	<u>Strathnaver Museum</u>	£20,000	SNH THC Joyce Family	Training & Learning / Land, Environment & Countryside
7	<b>Burrs Project</b>	To have a vocal record of the impact Burrs of Tongue had on the north of Scotland	North Sutherland	<u>Strathnaver Museum</u>	£10,000	Museums and Galleries Scotland Awards for All	Culture and Heritage
8	<b>Clan Mackay goes Global</b>	A global clan gathering both real and virtual	World wide	<u>Strathnaver Museum</u>	£20,000+ for first phase	Show Scotland Lottery Legacy	Culture and Heritage / Activities, Tourism
9	<b>Bettyhill swimming pool sports hall</b>	Build new sports hall on to pool	Bettyhill	<u>Tongue &amp; Farr Sports Association</u>	£500,000	tbc	Activities, facilities & services.
10	<b>Play park</b>	Establish a play park in the village	Bettyhill	<u>Bettyhill Community Council</u>	£20,000	tbc	Activities, facilities & Services
11	<b>Develop the centre</b>	To provide facilities for young people and youths	Bettyhill	<u>Farr Edge 2000</u>	£35,000	tbc	Activities, facilities & Services
12	<b>Borgie Forest</b>	To develop the forest trust and all associated wood production aspects	Borgie	<u>North Sutherland Community Forest Trust</u>	>£150,000	Lottery	Activities, facilities & Services / Land, environment & countryside access.
13	<b>Norcelt arts workshop development</b>	Improve a croft building to house a workshop and exhibition areas	Skerryay	<u>Nor-Celt</u>	£15,000	tbc	Activities, facilities & Services, culture & heritage, training & learning opportunities.

14	<b>Local food produce development</b>	To increase the availability through production and marketing of local food produce	North Sutherland	<u>North Coast Community Enterprise Ltd.</u>	£40,000 <b>Leader Amount:</b> £15,000 <b>Match Funders:</b> Esmee Fairbairn (tbc) NDA Socio-economic Fund (tbc); Caithness & Sutherland Regeneration Partnership (tbc); Lloyds TSB Foundation Scotland (tbc) Researching others	tbc	Social Enterprise & Micro Businesses/Training & Learning Opportunities
15	<b>Renewable energy</b>	To match fund from wind farm sources to enable many community projects to happen around Kyle of Tongue area primarily	Melness	<u>Melness and Tongue Community Development Trust</u>	tba	Lottery SRDP Community Energy Scotland HIE	All seven themes may feature – but renewables to the fore.
16	<b>Playpark</b>	Provide play area in village	Melness	<u>Tongue, Melness &amp; Skerray Community Council</u>	£5000	THC CVS Local funds	Activities, facilities and Services.
17	<b>Community Transport</b>	To provide community car for elderly in area	Melness	<u>Melness and Tongue Community Development Trust/ o4o</u>	£120,000 in 3 years time	O4O Highland Council Highland Cross	Activities, facilities and Services.
18	<b>Registration of interest in Land</b>	To register interest in local estate	Tongue	<u>Melness and Tongue Community Development Trust/ Mackay Country</u>	tba	tbc	Land, environment and access to the countryside
19	<b>Woodland Regeneration &amp; interpretation</b>	Environmental Improvement Scheme	Tongue	<u>Melness and Tongue Community Development Trust/ Mackay Country Community Trust</u>	>£100,000	tbc	Land, environment and access to the countryside

20	<b>Kyle of Tongue interpretation Trail part 2</b>	Footpaths and panels	Tongue	<u>Tongue Melness &amp; Skerray Community Council</u>	£15,000	tbc	Land, environment and access to the countryside
21	<b>Leaflets &amp; website phase2</b>	Produce further information and make more web pages	Tongue	<u>Tongue Melness &amp; Skerray Community Council</u>	£2,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services.
22	<b>Refurbish Durness TIC</b>	Bring into Community ownership and revamp all the displays to the recent feasibility study specifications	Durness	<u>Durness Development group</u>	£185,000	tbc	Tourism / Activities, facilities and services.
23	<b>Village square improvement</b>	Bring into community ownership and instigate an Environmental improvement scheme with interpretation	Durness	<u>Durness Community Council</u>	£30,000	tbc	Land, environment and access to the countryside / activities, facilities and services.
24	<b>Cape Wrath</b>	Feasibility study to define costs and potential to bring the land at Cape Wrath into community ownership and develop a more professional approach to a tourist experience while understanding the natural heritage and cultural importance of the area.	Durness	<u>Durness Development Group</u>	£50,000 Phase 1 Buyout £20,000 Phase 2 Feasibility £tba Phase 3 Development	tbc	Tourism / land, environment and access to the countryside
25	<b>Durness golf course</b>	Improvement and development to golf course	Durness	<u>Durness Golf Club</u>	£20,000	tbc	Tourism / land, environment and access to the countryside / activities, facilities and services.

26	<b>Footpaths network extension</b>	To create further footpaths and explore feasibility of including cycle tracks	Durness	<u>Durness Community Council &amp; Development Group</u>	£15,000	tbc	Tourism / land, environment and access to the countryside / activities, facilities and services.
27	<b>Signage and information coordination</b>	Leaflet and signs in Durness re-designed and reviewed to remove unnecessary signs and coordinate a new information leaflet	Durness	<u>Durness Community Council</u>	£10,000	tbc	Tourism
28	<b>Mackay Country Genealogy</b>	Create a professional service to provide , on a global scale, methods of tracing family history from Mackay Country	North West Sutherland	<u>Mackay Country Community Trust LTD/Strathnaver Museum</u>	Phase 1 Consultation for business plan £8,000 Phase 2 Implementation £20,000	tbc	Culture and Heritage / Tourism.
29	<b>Bards and Boughs</b>	Recreating the journey of poet Robb Donn from Freasgill to Glengolly	North West Sutherland	<u>Mackay Country Community Trust</u>	£5,000	tbc	Culture and Heritage.
30	<b>Kinlochbervie Football Pitch</b>	Draining and surfacing the Football pitch	Kinlochbervie	<u>Kinlochbervie Football Club and Community Council</u>	£100,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services.
31	<b>Heritage Centre</b>	Convert unused building at harbour to house heritage of fishing and other artefacts	KLB	<u>KLB Community Council</u>	£80,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / culture and heritage
32	<b>Moine Path</b>	Full environmental feasibility study for developing themed walk from Kyle of Tongue to Kyle of Durness	North West Sutherland	<u>Mackay Country Community Trust</u>	Several phases still to be completed but Phase 1 completed survey by Chris Cairns from Conserve	SNH	Tourism / land, environment and access to the countryside

33		Hall improvements	Skerray		£80,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
34		Hall improvements	Scourie		£5,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
35		Hall improvements	Stoer		£10,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
36		Hall improvements	Drumbeg		£100,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
37		Hall improvements	Lochinver		£2,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
38		Hall improvements	Kinlochbervie		£200,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
39		Hall improvements	Tongue Hall		£10,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
40		Hall improvements	Melness hall		£100,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
41		Hall improvements	Bettyhill Hall		£25,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
42	<b>Melvich Village Hall</b>	Refurbishment of village hall to meet health and safety standards and Disability Act	Melvich	<u>Melvich Village Hall Committee</u>	£80K of which £15K from Leader	HC – Received	Activities, facilities and services.

43		Hall improvements	Strathnaver Hall		£200,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
44		Hall improvements	Halladale Hall		£200,000	tbc	Activities, facilities and services / renewables.
45	<b>North Sutherland Outdoor Bowling Club – Outdoor Green</b>	Provision of an all-weather outdoor bowling green. Hopefully within 1 year for commencement of work. Release of the land from common grazing is under negotiation, after that fund raising will be limiting factor.	Strathy (behind but not associated with Strathy hall)	<u>North Sutherland Outdoor Bowling Club</u>	£250,000/£100,000	None as yet but approaches will be made to Sports for All, CASE and Highland Council amongst others	Facilities, Activities & Services, Tourism (equal opportunities for sport, local involvement)
46	<b>NWCBA</b>	Provide Community Transport: 16 passenger accessible minibus and p/t transport coordinator	North West Sutherland	<u>NWCBA</u>	£143035 total; LEADER bid not yet determined – depends on HC bid success.	Highland Council, Sutherland Partnership, Anne Duchess of Westminster's Charity. All applications submitted recently.	Facilities, Activities & Services, Environment & Countryside Access
47	<b>Glencanisp Lodge refurbishment.</b>	Refurbish Glencanisp Lodge.	Glencanisp, Assynt.	<u>Assynt Foundation.</u>	£1,500,000 total	tbc	Facilities, Activities & Services, Environment & Countryside Access
48	<b>Glencanisp Lodge Manager</b>	Project to employ a manager run Glencanisp Lodge, following its redevelopment and ensuing increased use for a diverse range of commercial, community, social, arts and other user groups and activities.	Glencanisp, Lochinver	<u>Assynt Foundation</u>		tbc	Social Enterprise & Micro-business Facilities, Activities & Services Culture & Heritage Tourism

49	<b>Glencanisp Venison and Meat Processing</b>	Feasibility work, training, and infrastructure, to develop skills and facilities to allow processing, marketing and value added sale of venison and other local meat.	Glencanisp, Lochinver	<u>Assynt Foundation</u>		HIE (to be confirmed)	Social Enterprise & Micro-business Land, Environment & the Countryside
50	<b>Assynt Foundation Administrative Assistant post</b>	Devoted staff member to run AF's expanding activities. This will ensure the smooth running of business and allow other staff the time they require in order to progress development of many important projects.	Glencanisp, Lochinver	<u>Assynt Foundation</u>		tbc	Social Enterprise & Micro-business
51	<b>Recycling facility expansion.</b>	Expansion of recycling facilities to include additional area, additional recyclates (e.g. plastics) and a business-based collection scheme. Increased employment opportunities for young people.	Bettyhill location - Melvich to Melness expansion.	<u>BEAG</u>	£75,000	tbc	Facilities, Activities & Services, Renewables, Social Enterprise & Microbusiness.
52	<b>Fountain Road Hall</b>	Renovation and extension of church hall. Includes a range of novel and eco-friendly enhancements.	Golspie	<u>Fountain Road Development Group.</u>	£113,500 / £45,000	Previous phases HICEC, CED. This phase Albyn Housing, Wider Role.	Facilities, Activities & Services, Renewables.
53	<b>Brora Environmental Improvements</b>	Renewal of streetscape and street furniture to Fountain Square, upgrading pavement frontage to War Memorial Clock, signage including heritage trail.	Brora	<u>Highland Council</u>	tbc	Highland Council	Facilities, Activities & Services, Tourism.
54	<b>Farmers' Market Expansion.</b>	Develop the skills base of ESP, expand the skills of ESP into the community, put DFM on a sounder footing, expand the size and range of DFM.	Dornoch	<u>East Sutherland Producers / Dornoch Farmers' Market / Community of East Sutherland.</u>	tbc	tbc	Facilities, Activities & Services, Training & Learning Oppor'ties, Social Enterprise & Microbusiness.

55	<b>Sutherland Summit.</b>	Socio-economic summit meeting of public, private and third sector interests across Sutherland, including participation of 2 S.G. Ministers.	Lairg	CVS North / Scottish Government, all 17 Sutherland Community Councils, Sutherland Youth Groups, Social Enterprises, Community and voluntary Groups, agencies, local government, businesses at all levels, Sutherland Partnership and Sutherland's people..	£12,500 / £5200	CVS North £1,000 VGES £1,000 NWC Disc £2,000 ESE Disc £2,000 HIE / SNH £1,300	All LEADER themes could be served by this important event.
56	<b>Sutherland Agricultural Show.</b>	Purchase a marquee to allow SAS to run annual "Blas Na Fasaich" (Taste of the Wilderness) event as part of its country show. To showcase Sutherland produce.	Dornoch	<u>Sutherland Agricultural Society Show Ltd.</u> /	£30,000 / £10,000	High'd Leg'y £10K HC Wards £7K Own Funds £2.5K All secured.	
57	<b>Embo Woodland Crofts</b>	Community purchase Fourpenny Plantation under national forest land scheme, & creation of new tenant-only crofts to be assigned to local young people.	Embo	<u>Embo Trust.</u> / Highland Council Wards.	£630,000 / £100,000	Big LF Grant of £370K being considered. Outcome expected Mar 09.	All LEADER themes could be served by this initiative.
58	<b>Embo Community Hall</b>	To build a new community hall on the old school site.	Embo	<u>Embo Community Hall Assoc.</u>	£500,000	tbc	Facilities, Activities & Services.
59	<b>Bonar Bridge Community Hall</b>	To transform BBCH into an environmentally-friendly building.	Bonar Bridge	<u>Bonar Bridge Community Hall Association</u>	tbc	tbc	Facilities, Activities & Services, Renewables.
60	<b>Dornoch Community Centre</b>	To carry out a feasibility study into building a new, environmentally-friendly Community Centre.	Dornoch	<u>Dornoch and District Community Association</u>	£5000 / £2,250	Balance from own funds.	Facilities, Activities & Services, Renewables.

61	<b>North West Highlands Geopark</b>	To use North-West Highlands geology, and membership of the European Geopark Network, as a driver of successful and sustainable community development, based on the area's UNESCO geopark status.	Geopark (Durness, KLB, Scourie, Assynt and Coigach CC areas)	<u>Geopark Steering Group</u> (comprising a number of community and agency stakeholders.)	£222,000 from 2009 to 2012. LEADER component tbc – perhaps £87,000 over three years.	A range of other possible funders (agency and charitable trust) as decided by NWHG Steering Group.	All seven strategic themes will be served by the Geopark.
62	<b>LEADER Local Area Partnership Arrangements</b>	To carry out the functions of the LEADER Local Area Partnership for Sutherland, making all necessary arrangements for the LAP to select Sutherland community projects for funding in a consistent, fair, timely and transparent manner.	All of Sutherland	<u>Sutherland Partnership.</u>	£20,000 over the four years to 2013, in equal annual instalments.	Highland Council, SNH (funding approved) plus others tbc.	By having an effective local LAP, this initiative will serve all seven strategic themes.
62	<b>Assynt Landscapes/ Hidden Lives</b>	Community heritage project, centred on the landscape, but looking for the people who shaped it. Exploring links between archaeology and ecology. Access/interpretation/training; underpinning high-quality tourism development.	Assynt-Whole Parish	<u>Historic Assynt/ Comunn Eachdraidh Asainte.</u> Culag Community Woodland Trust, Assynt Tourism Group, Historic Scotland, Archaeology Scotland, Caithness Archaeological Trust and others.	Not yet finalised; probably c. £10,000 for next (second phase). Looking for max. Poss from Leader at this stage.	Not yet identified	Culture and Heritage; Training and Learning Opportunities; Environment and Countryside Access; Tourism.
63	<b>Sutherland Partnership</b>	Sutherland Partnership Biodiversity Projects Scheme.	Communities across Sutherland	<u>Sutherland Partnership / SNH</u>	£36,000, of which £16,000 LEADER	SNH. £20,000 funding approved and received.	Land, Environment and Countryside Access