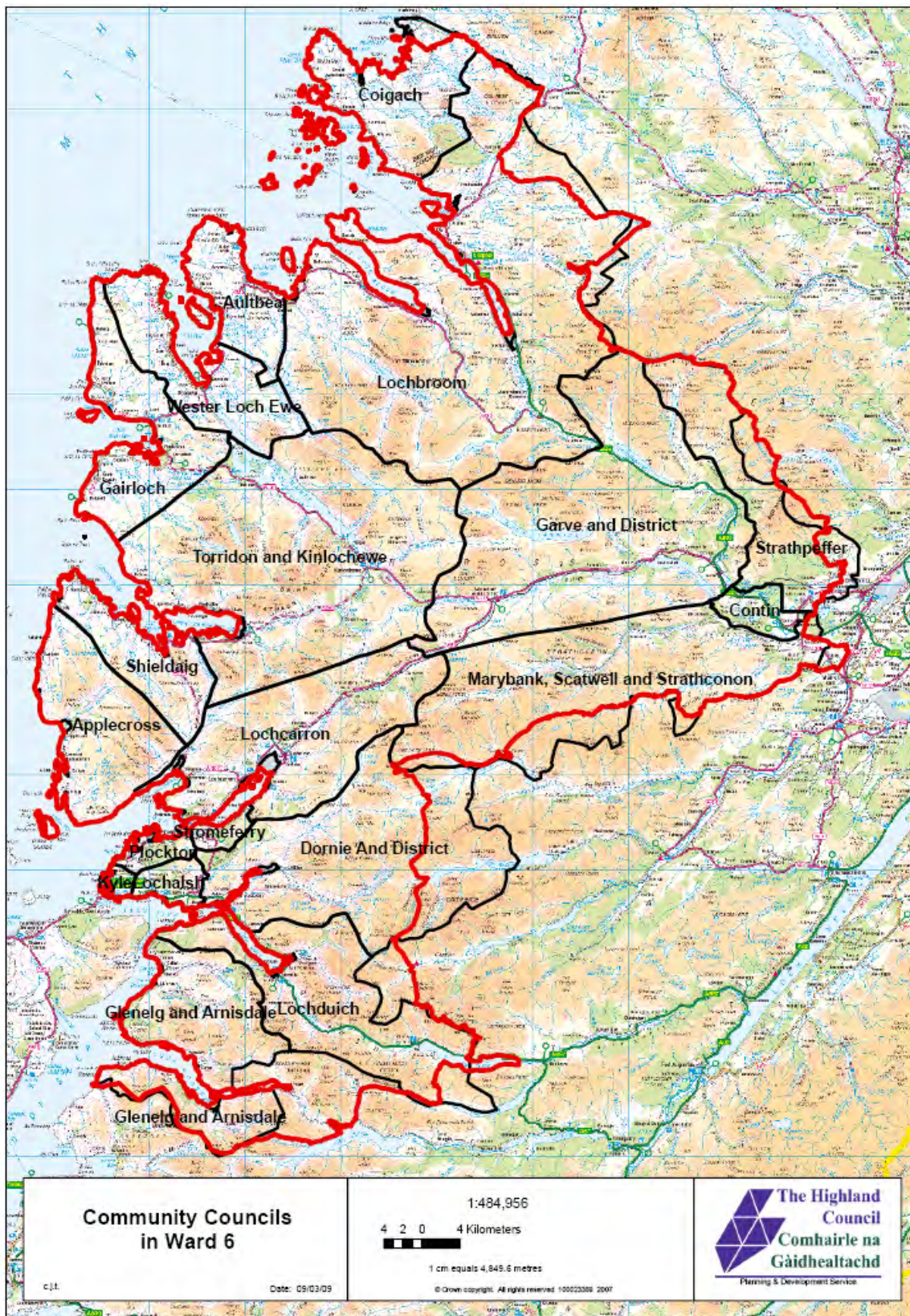


Draft Community Development Plan
For Ward 6, Wester Ross, Strathpeffer &
Lochalsh



Compiled by Fiona Downie, Manager, Wester Ross Alliance

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1. Introduction

This development plan was prompted by the Highland LEADER programme 2007 to 2013, with an initial budget allocation for the Wester Ross, Lochalsh and Strathpeffer area of £825,702.

The remit of this development plan is to link wider LEADER priorities to more localised levels and in the process highlight the aspirations of the local community (at the time of its writing). This plan may also incorporate wider themes than those outlined by LEADER as defined in section 7.

Given the scattered nature of the Ward area it was thought best to give a brief overview of the whole ward then give a community profile as per community council boundary area which will best reflect the needs and nature of each community.

The Development plan was compiled following the National Standards of community engagement as outlined in section 10.

2. National Context

Moving Scotland Forward: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2008-09 sets out the Scottish Government has "a single, overarching Purpose - to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth - and we are determined to work in partnership with wider Scottish society so together we can deliver on the Purpose."

The Government's vision for success for Scotland is described and measured in four parts which support and reinforce each other:

- The Government's Purpose and its associated targets
- Five Strategic Objectives that describe where the Government will focus their actions
- 15 National Outcomes that describe what the Government wants to achieve
- 45 National Indicators that enable us to track progress

The Government's Purpose and its associated targets are as follows-

- **Economic Growth (GDP)** - To raise the GDP growth rate to the UK level by 2011; To match the GDP growth rate of the small independent EU countries by 2017 (T)
- **Productivity** - To rank in the top quartile for productivity against our key trading partners in the OECD by 2017 (T)
- **Participation** - To maintain our position on labour market participation as the top performing country in the UK; To close the gap with the top five OECD economies by 2017 (T)
- **Population** - To match average European (EU15) population growth over the period from 2007 to 2017 (T); Supported by increasing healthy life expectancy in Scotland over the period 2007 to 2017
- **Solidarity** - To increase overall income and the proportion of income earned by the three lowest deciles as a group by 2017 (T)
- **Cohesion** - To narrow the gap in participation between Scotland's best and worst performing regions by 2017 (T)
- **Sustainability** - To reduce emissions over the period to 2011 (T), To reduce emissions by 80 percent by 2050 (T)

The Government's Strategic Objectives are -

- **A Greener Scotland** - Improve Scotland's natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it.
- **A Wealthier and Fairer Scotland** - Enable businesses and people to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth.
- **A Smarter Scotland** - Expand opportunities for people in Scotland to succeed from nurture through to life long learning, ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements.
- **A Healthier Scotland** - Help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health.
- **A Safer and Stronger Scotland** - Help local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life.

The Government's 15 National Outcomes are that-

- We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe
- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.

- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
- We live longer, healthier lives.
- We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

The Government's 45 National Indicators will be to -

- At least halve the gap in total research and development spending compared with EU average by 2011 (T)
- Achieve annual milestones for reducing inpatient or day case waiting times culminating in the delivery of an 18 week referral to treatment time from December 2011 (T)
- Increase the business start-up rate
- Reduce proportion of people aged 65 and over admitted as emergency inpatients 2 or more times in a single year
- Grow exports at a faster average rate than GDP (T)
- Reduce mortality from coronary heart disease among the under 75s in deprived areas
- Improve public sector efficiency through the generation of 2% cash releasing efficiency savings per annum (T)
- Increase the percentage of people aged 65 and over with high levels of care needs who are cared for at home
- Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services delivered
- All unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation by 2012 (T)
- Reduce the number of Scottish public bodies by 25% by 2011 (T)
- Reduce overall reconviction rates by 2 percentage points by 2011 (T)
- Reduce the proportion of driver journeys delayed due to traffic congestion
- Reduce overall crime victimisation rates by 2 percentage points by 2011 (T)
- Increase the percentage of Scottish domiciled graduates from Scottish Higher Education Institutions in positive destinations
- Increase the percentage of criminal cases dealt with within 26 weeks by 3 percentage points by 2011 (T)
- Improve knowledge transfer from research activity in universities
- Increase the rate of new house building
- Increase the proportion of school leavers (from Scottish publicly funded schools) in positive and sustained destinations (FE, HE, employment or training)
- Increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live
- Increase the proportion of schools receiving positive inspection reports
- Decrease the estimated number of problem drug users in Scotland by 2011 (T)
- Reduce number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems
- Increase positive public perception of the general crime rate in local area
- Child protection inspection findings: increase the overall proportion of local authority areas receiving positive inspection reports
- Reduce overall ecological footprint
- Decrease the proportion of individuals living in poverty
- Increase to 95% the proportion of protected nature sites in favourable condition (T)
- 60% of school children in primary 1 will have no signs of dental disease by 2010 (T)
- Improve the state of Scotland's Historic Buildings, monuments and environment
- Improve the quality of healthcare experience
- Biodiversity: increase the index of abundance of terrestrial breeding birds

- Increase the proportion of pre-school centres receiving positive inspection reports
- Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport
- Increase the social economy turnover
- Increase the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors per week
- Reduce the rate of increase in the proportion of children with their Body Mass Index outwith a healthy range by 2018 (T)
- 50% of electricity generated in Scotland to come from renewable sources by 2020 (interim target of 31% by 2011) (T)
- Increase the average score of adults on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale by 2011 (T)
- Reduce to 1.32 million tonnes waste sent to landfill by 2010 (T)
- Increase healthy life expectancy at birth in the most deprived areas
- Ensure 70% key commercial fish stocks at full reproductive capacity and harvested sustainably by 2015
- Reduce the percentage of the adult population who smoke to 22% by 2010 (T)
- Improve people's perceptions, attitudes and awareness of Scotland's reputation
- Reduce alcohol related hospital admissions by 2011 (T)

(T) In addition to showing the latest direction of travel, as data for 2007 and beyond become available we will show whether or not we are on track to achieve the target.

Source: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms>

3. Local Context

The Local Authority for Ward 6 is the Highland Council.

Highland Council - Draft Corporate Plan

The Council's Programme

The Council is currently re-drafting its Corporate Plan to mirror the priorities of the Programme of The Highland Council 2009-2011, entitled Strengthening the Highlands. The Administration aims to create sustainable communities with more balanced population growth and economic development across the Highlands and to build a fairer and healthier Highlands. The Programme contains a total of 93 commitments across five main themes and a further 18 actions to work with the Scottish and UK Governments. This includes 45 new or enhanced actions and six new commitments to take to Government. The themes are: -

- What we will do for children and families
- What we will do for communities and older people
- What we will do for the economy
- What we will do for our environment
- What we will do to make Highland Council more effective & efficient

Source: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/corporateplan/>

4. Ward Profile

Ward 6 means the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh electoral ward of Highland Council as laid down in the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004, established under The Highlands (Electoral arrangements) Order 2006, or its successors in law;

The local authority, Highland Council operates within the ward, 23 Primary Schools which feed into 4 Secondary schools (1 out with the Ward 6 boundary); 6 Libraries; 2 mobile Libraries; 2 Leisure Centres and 4 Service Points.

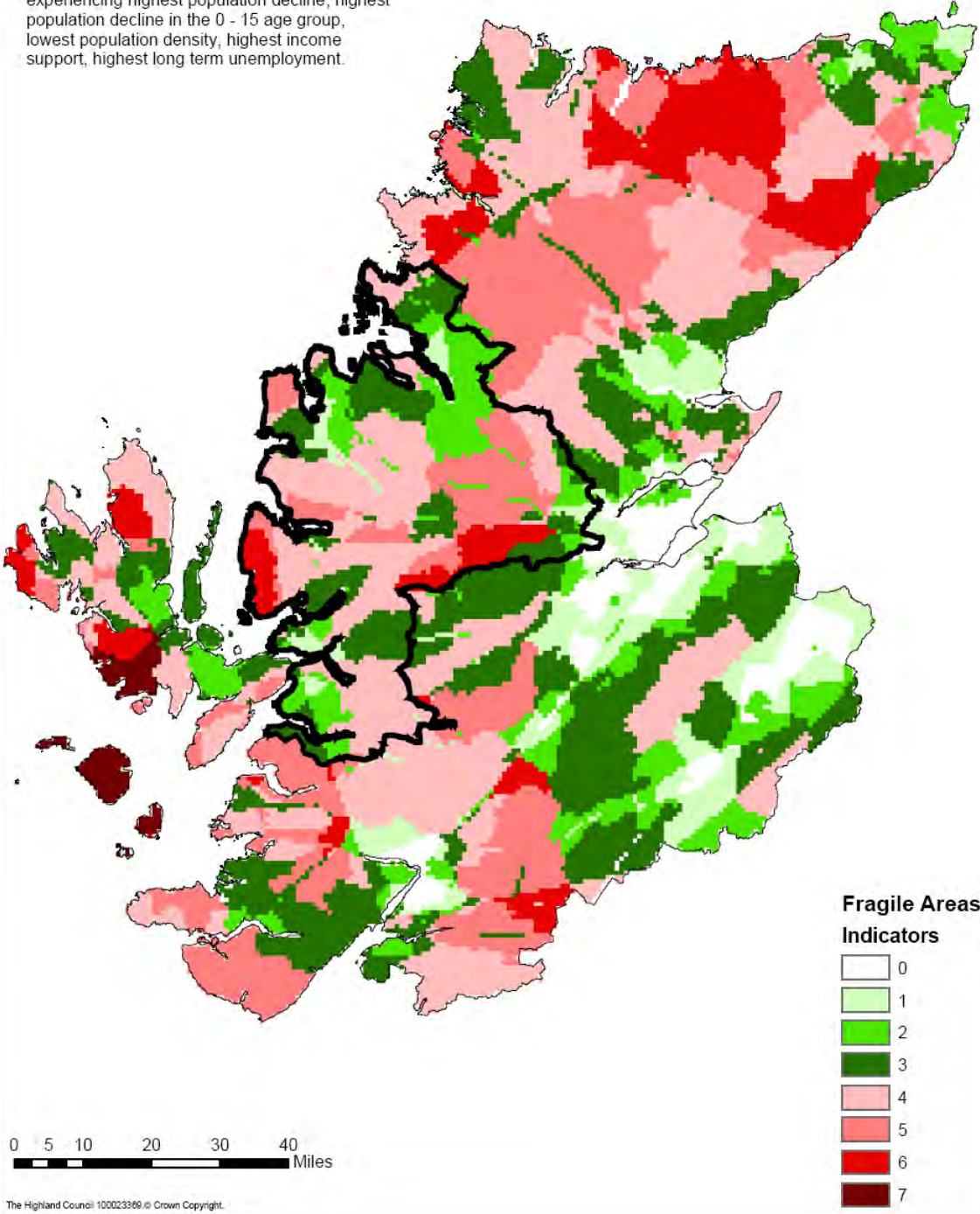
There are 20 community councils functioning within the ward namely -

- Applecross Community Council
- Aultbea Community Council
- Coigach Community Council
- Contin Community Council
- Dornie and District Community Council
- Gairloch Community Council
- Garve and District Community Council
- Glenelg and Arnisdale Community Council
- Kyle Community Council
- Lochalsh Community Council
- Lochbroom Community Council
- Lochcarron Community Council
- Lochduich Community Council
- Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon Community Council
- Plockton and District Community Council
- Shieldaig Community Council
- Strathpeffer Community Council
- Stromeferry and Achmore Community Council
- Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council
- Wester Loch Ewe Community Council

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh is the largest Ward with the second lowest population density in Highland. With a total geographical area of 4,948km². It is a primarily a mountainous region with settlements separated by an extensive coastline and sea lochs. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty. There is a strong tradition of self help and community organisation in the villages. While the population has been growing it is also ageing. The area has been under considerable pressure from the second and holiday home market – almost 25% over the whole area but rising to 40% in some localities. The total population has shown a moderate increase since the 2001 Census as a result of inward migration, with over half of the house sales in some west coast settlements to buyers from outside Scotland. The rurality of the ward is demonstrated with population figures at 11,498 giving a population density of 2.3 persons per km² in comparison to the highland average of 8.2 persons per km² and national average of 66 persons per km².(ref gro(s)2007 mid year est).

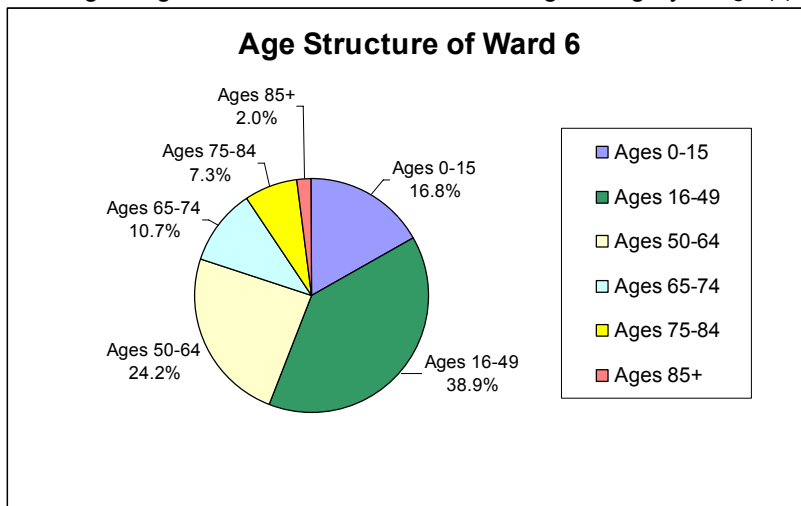
Highland Fragile Areas 2003

This map represents the intersection of areas that are more than 10 minutes from key services, more than 90 minutes drive from Inverness and experiencing highest population decline, highest population decline in the 0 - 15 age group, lowest population density, highest income support, highest long term unemployment.

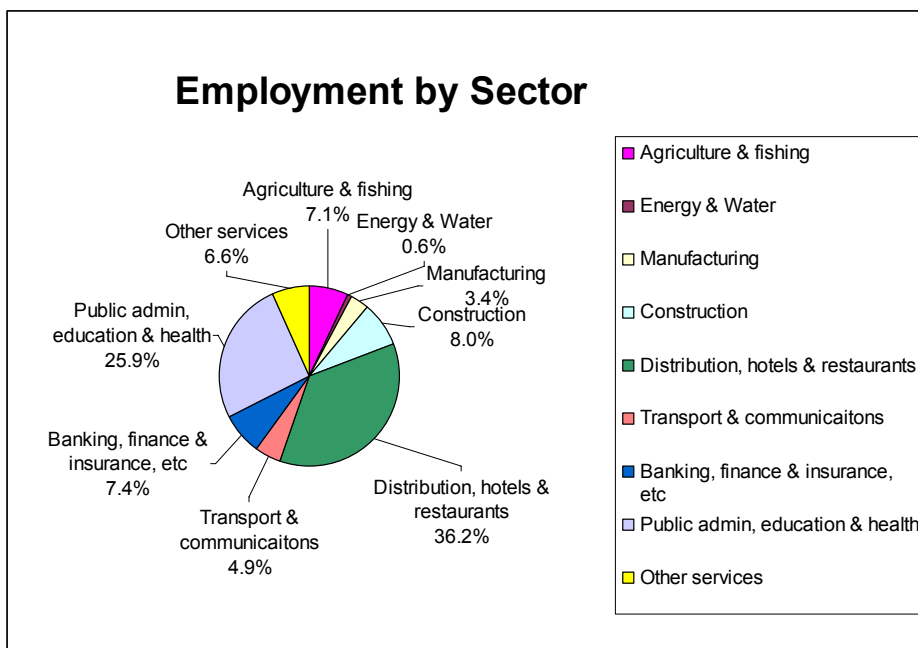


The Highland Council 100023369 © Crown Copyright.

The largest age band in Ward 6 is the 16-49 age category. *ref gro(s)2007 mid year est*



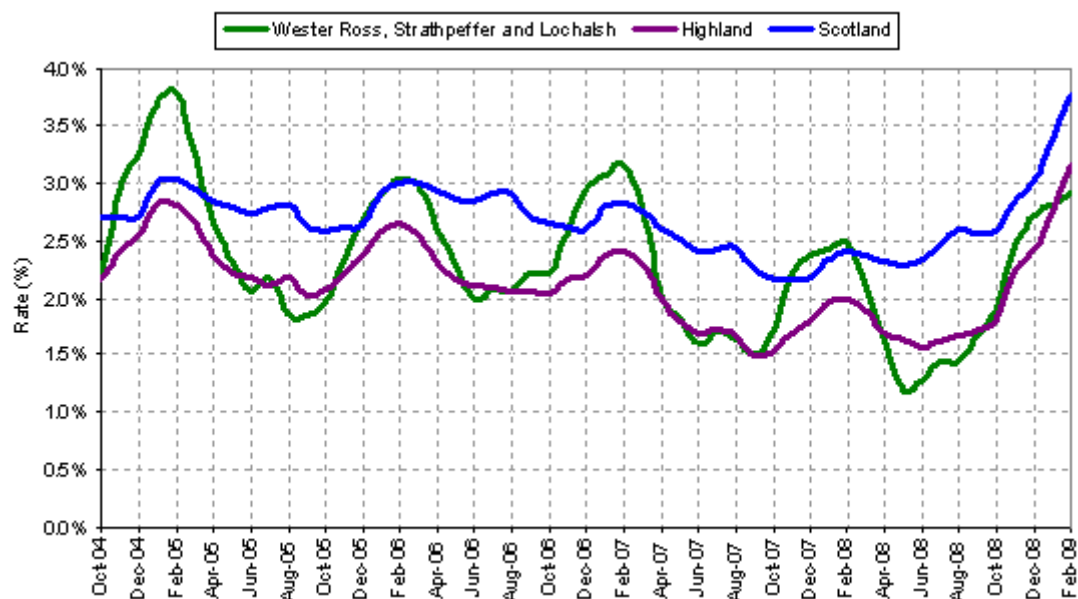
The overall age profile is older than the Highland average with a below average proportion in the under 50 age groups. 300 overseas migrant workers moved into the Ward between 2002 and 2006, two thirds from eastern Europe.



Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2007

Not surprisingly given the beauty and outdoor environment of the ward, a heavy reliance on the tourist trade is demonstrated with Distribution, hotels & restaurants having the largest employment sector but the current seasonality of this trade is also reflected with unemployment rates rising in the winter months and falling during the more traditional tourist season as shown overleaf.

Figure 1: Unemployment Rates (October 2004 to February 2009)



Although Agriculture & fishing and Construction make up quite a small proportion of the wards employment, this sector holds a significantly higher percentage than the highland and national average, which is also reflective of the rural and coastal setting of the ward.

The proportion of part time jobs is well above the Highland average and the ward holds the second highest proportion of self-employed workers, 24% (Census 2001) with the proportion of jobs in the public sector is slightly below the Highland average.

Number of People in Employment

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Number of people in employment *	4,300	107,700	2,407,700
* Rounded to nearest 100 people Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2007			

Latest unemployment rates (November 2008)

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Unemployment rate *	2.5	2.2	2.8
Long term unemployment rate **	0.6	0.4	0.6
* Percentage of resident working age population claiming Job Seekers Allowance ** Percentage of resident working age population claiming Job Seekers Allowance for 6 months or more Source: Department for Work and Pensions data from NOMIS			

Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disability Allowance (May 2008)

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disability Allowance claimant rate *	6.6	7.5	9.2
* Percentage of resident working age population Source: Department for Work and Pensions data from NOMIS			

Health

This Census response is one of the best simple measures we have of the health of our population. Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh has a relatively low rate of self-reported long term illness.

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Percentage of total population:			
with a limiting long-term illness	17.9	18.4	20.3
without a limiting long-term illness	82.1	81.6	79.7
Source: Census 2001			

Households & Housing Stock

The following tables provide information on housing and household tenure in this Ward. Housing completions provide us with a picture of the growth of the local area whilst housing tenure and occupancy examine the nature of housing in the Ward. The number of new homes built in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh during the last five years was slightly below the Highland average. The Ward is a rural area which experiences a high rate of "windfall" planning applications for small developments and this, together with sites allocated in the Local Plan, could ensure an adequate supply of housing land. However, around half of the sites cannot be started until Scottish Water improve their infrastructure which could lead to a general shortage of viable sites.

Number of households

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Number of households	4,980	89,528	2,192,246
Source: Census 2001			

House Prices

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Number of private house sales in 2007	203	4,930	133,609
Average house price	£202,775	£168,090	£164,165
Median (midpoint) house price	£195,000	£150,500	£136,800
Source: Communities Scotland/Registers of Scotland 2007			

Housing Land Audit

	Ward	Highland
Number of new homes* that potentially will be built between 2008-2011 :	1,239	17,575
* identified in the Local Plan or with planning permission		
Source: Highland Council		

Further information about the Housing Land Audit is available on the <http://highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/highlandfactandfigures/housinglandaudit/>

Number of Council Houses

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Number of Council owned houses	480	13,803	329,524
Source: Highland Council / Scottish Executive 2008			

Housing Tenure

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Percentage of households that are:			
owner occupied	67.8	65.7	62.6
rented from the Council/Scottish Homes	13.4	18.0	21.6
rented from housing association	2.5	3.6	5.6
privately rented	10.4	8.5	6.7
other	6.0	4.2	3.5
Source: Census 2001			

Housing Occupancy

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Percentage of housing stock that is:			
occupied	77.2	89.8	94.9
second/holiday homes	19.0	6.2	1.3
vacant	3.9	4.0	3.8
Percentages are based on housing stock figures of 6,452 (Ward), 99,739 (Highland) and 2,308,939 (Scotland) from the Census 2001			

Income & Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, SIMD, is the Executive's official measure for identifying small area concentrations of multiple deprivation. Household incomes are taken from CACI Paycheck, a commercial database based on lifestyle surveys and market research data, supplied by Communities Scotland to help with housing analysis. No datazones within the Ward are identified as severely deprived and the proportion of people classed as employment deprived and income deprived are both below the Highland average. Average household incomes are below the Highland average.

	Ward	Highland	Scotland
Number of income deprived people *	1,178	23,874	707,728
Percentage of income deprived people *	10.3	11.1	13.8
Number of employment deprived people *	632	13,552	409,907
Percentage of employment deprived people *	9.4	10.6	12.9
Number of candidate Data Zones for Regeneration Funding	0	17	976
Average annual income **	£28,369	£30,510	£32,118
Percentage of households earning less than £10k per year **	10.7	9.9	9.6
* Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006 ** Source: CACI Paycheck 2007			

More information & Statistical information can be found at
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/highlandfactsandfigures/ward06-z-wardstats.htm>

Source: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/highlandfactsandfigures/ward06-z-wardstats.htm>

5. Local Area Plan Summary

Extracted from Wester Ross Local Plan – Adopted June 2006

Public consultation exercises have highlighted the main issues to be addressed for Wester Ross as follows.

<p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the economic sectors on which the economy is based. • Maintaining and supporting existing economic activities. • Reducing the dependence on seasonal employment. • Creating new jobs linked with managing the environment. • Making better use of existing industrial and commercial infrastructure. • Continuing to reduce unemployment. • Increasing opportunities for jobs based in information technology. 	<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing for an increasing population and an increasing number of households. • Providing for more housing. • Meeting the need for affordable housing. • Reducing the effect of the high number of second and holiday homes. • Achieving sustainable design. • Making sure that land is available for housing (including using crofting lands electively). • Overcoming factors which make development difficult (including high infrastructure costs and poor ground conditions).
<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending the availability of broadband. • Improving investment in roads, water and sewage, and considering the effect of European Union directives. • Considering whether upgrading electricity power lines (as part of the link from the Western Isles to the Central Belt) is appropriate. • Promoting best practice for construction and design. 	<p>Fragility and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing for an ageing population. • Recognising that population growth is uneven (with decline in some areas). • Maintaining and improving existing services. • Making sure that everyone has equal access to services, public transport and waste services.
<p>Natural and cultural heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a high-quality natural heritage. • Recognising the high number and extensive coverage of European and national designations (covering landscape and natural conservation). • Taking account of cultural heritage sites (including historical landscapes, archaeological sites and historic buildings). • Dealing with demand for development while protecting the quality and character of the environment. • Recognising the importance of recreation and tourism. 	<p>Coast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing the effect of fish-farm developments against the quality of the environment. • Recognising the relationship of development between the coast and the land. • Looking at the possibility of further developing the coast, including marinas and renewable energy, for the benefit of local communities. • Aiming to benefit from the rich natural variety and quality of marine life. • Investigating the marine cultural heritage.

It is acknowledged, that this extract does not include consultation in the Lochalsh area but findings in the 1999 Skye & Lochalsh local plan demonstrate comparable shared themes as set out above. Lochalsh now comes under West Highland & Islands Local Plan which was as at a deposit draft stage at the time of compiling this plan which also reflects common themes as outlined above. Achnasheen, Strathpeffer, Contin, Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon community councils areas are incorporated into the Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan as adopted Feb 2007, which highlights: most areas are gateway settlements and have scope for development to capture passing trade but hold a threat of communities losing identity, with population levels remaining static and many primary schools within these areas closed with children attending neighbouring primary schools, with the exception of Strathpeffer. Strathpeffer was highlighted as benefiting from Victorian architecture with the potential to “*become a focus of culture & heritage both within Ross-Shire and throughout the Highlands*”

As part of Highland Leader Development Strategy key challenges identified for the Ward 6 area were as follows:

- Provision of affordable housing.
- Economic development in a National Scenic Area.
- Retaining population in the 16-25 age range.
- Supporting community groups and community infrastructure in very small, remote communities.
- Retaining crofting activity and establishing local markets for local produce.