

Baseline Study
for Fernaig Community Trust
Phase 1 of 5
Investigating Land Purchase in South Strome Forest

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Appendix I – Community Questionnaire

Executive Summary

Fernaig Community Trust (FCT) has commissioned Solas Business Services Ltd to carry out a scoping study into the possibility of land purchase in South Strome Forest, Wester Ross. The study is divided into a number of stages, the first being a socio-economic baseline study. It covers the area of the Fernaig Community Trust, including the villages and townships of Achmore, Ardnarrff, Braeintra, Craig, Portchuillin and Stromeferry.

FCT, formed in 1998, currently owns 110 acres of agricultural land which is used for 3 purposes: small holdings, allotments and woodland regeneration. It is a partner in a Concordat with Forestry Commission Scotland, covering the whole area of South Strome Forest.

The information in this report is drawn from 2001 Census and other government information such as the West Highlands & Islands Local Plan, Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics and Highland Council statistics, a whole estate plan drawn up in 2002, informal discussions and a community survey carried out in April 09.

The most recent accurate population statistics for the area are those in the 2001 Census, now 8 years out of date. However, they showed a population of 141, an increase of 18.75% from 1991 and with a much lower age range than the average Highland population. The challenge then is to maintain a healthy balance in age range in an area which has little employment and few facilities. The questionnaire returned information for 51 people, with 20.6% being aged 16 or under and 27.5% over 60.

Employment is primarily based outwith the locality. Of questionnaire returnees, only 25% work within a 5-mile radius and the other 75% beyond that. 30% of the returnees are self-employed, maintaining the high level of self-employment seen in the 2001 Census. 22.5% of respondents are retired.

Teaching and construction were the 2 main employment sectors in the survey. Hospitality, retail and utilities were the next most common. No respondents were engaged in farming or forestry and only 1 in fishing. The majority of respondents (82%) were satisfied with their current employment.

Demand for acquisition of woodland crofts has been investigated very informally at this stage. Some 10 people who work or live in the vicinity (>10miles) have stated that they would be interested in a woodland croft and there is a range of reasons for this.

Allied with employment and location is car ownership. As is to be expected in a locality where there is almost no public transport and few employment opportunities, car ownership levels are high.

The housing sector is dominated by privately-owned homes. The Housing Association does not own any properties in the area and there is very limited Council or privately rented housing available. While the respondents were comfortably housed and did not foresee their having a need for more housing, the majority (77%) were of the opinion that there would be

others who did need housing. The whole estate plan identified one of the reasons for immigration by younger people to the area as being the then availability of affordable housing.

Suggestions were made regarding possible locations for new housing and discussion with The Highland Council planning and development department suggest that any “substantial housing development” in the forest would be considered outwith the Local Plan. It has identified areas within settlement zones which are considered suitable for development.

The land around Achmore is either agricultural, in private or the Trust ownership, or under forestry. South Strome Forest covers 1,623 hectares, of which 70% is sitka spruce. It is part of this forest that the Trust is considering purchasing.

There are very limited local amenities, amounting to only the village hall which was renovated and extended in 2000. Shops and other facilities are mostly 12 miles away in Kyle of Lochalsh. As stated earlier, public transport is extremely limited with a railway station in Strome ferry on the Kyle/Inverness line and school buses stopping in Achmore on schooldays only. The primary schools are in Auchtertyre and Plockton and the secondary school also in Plockton.

Hobbies, sports and other activities are primarily provided for either in the Achmore Village Hall, or at the High School in Plockton. Facilities and amenities for outdoor activities have been developed through the creation of paths in Strome Wood. The desire for access to outdoor activities came through strongly in the current community consultation and the 2006 survey.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

As part of Fernaig Community Trust's decision to explore the opportunities offered by purchase of part of Strome Forest through the National Forest Land Scheme, Solas Business Services Ltd was commissioned to carry out background investigation and a subsequent options appraisal. This report is to inform the Trust about the existing situation in its area of operation. It will also inform the subsequent options appraisal which is intended to enable the community to make decisions on what options, if any, it wishes to pursue in relation to purchase of forest land.

1.2 Background

In 1996, some residents of the area discussed with the remainder of the community the potential for creating employment through using the forest for recreation and other purposes, and changing the operational management of the forest. This was agreed to be a worthwhile development and it was pursued firstly with the Scottish Office and subsequently with Forest Enterprise, the then commercial arm of the Forestry Commission. A steering group was formed to establish a partnership with the Forestry Commission and this was progressed over a lengthy period.

1.3 Fernaig Community Trust

During this time, Fernaig Community Trust was established in 1998 with a view to making a community purchase of Fernaig Estate which had come on the market. The bid was unsuccessful. However, in 2001 the Trust purchased part (110 acres of agricultural land) of the Fernaig Estate from the new owner. Two house sites were sold to the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust to part-finance the purchase and development of the land, and the remainder has provided small holdings and allotments for local residents, as well as land for forestry and communal use.

1.4 Concordat

In the meantime, a Concordat between Fernaig Community Trust and the Forestry Commission was signed in October 2000. This covers the whole of South Strome Forest. There have been very limited but successful developments in the forest since the establishment of the Concordat, but lengthy delays, combined with differences in understanding of the partnership, has meant a difficult and frustrating working relationship.

With the enactment of the National Forest Land Scheme in 2005, the Trust decided that it was appropriate to gauge the views of the community about the possible purchase of the forest and a questionnaire was used to ascertain views. It demonstrated interest in purchase and also suggested different activities and developments which people thought would be appropriate. However, it was decided to hold off from progressing this until the implementation of the Crofting Reform Act which would create the mechanism for the establishment of woodland crofts. This was enacted in 2007.

1.5 Feasibility Study

The Trust successfully applied for funding under the Investing in Ideas scheme of the National Lottery to carry out a feasibility study for forest crofts and this work is being undertaken to that end.

1.6 First stage

Solas Business Services Ltd proposed to carry out the study in five stages. The first, contained within this document, was a baseline study of the area. Subsequent to this would be an options appraisal. That information would be used by the community in deciding which, if any, option it wishes to pursue. Dependent on the outcome of that decision, there may be further work in developing the preferred option and creating a project plan for its implementation.

1.7 Remit

There are a number of possible uses of this land including the creation of woodland crofts (using the new croft provisions of the Crofting Reform Act 2007), affordable housing, and for community management for woodfuel, timber, recreation, energy, etc. However, before the community embarks on this course of action, it is first necessary to ascertain the needs and aspirations of the community and then determine how best to address those needs

1.8 Area

Fernaig Community Trust is based primarily on the Achmore and Stromeferry Community Council area. By special resolution, Craig was added to the area covered by the Trust. It comprises the settlements of Achmore, Ardnarff, Braeintra, Craig, Portachullin, and Stromeferry.

1.9 Sources of information

A number of different sources of information have been used in compiling this report. Some of these are very recent while others are now considerably aged, with the consequent reservations about accuracy. However, the latter are useful for trend information and so have been included in preparing this baseline.

1.9.1 Community Survey

As part of this work, it was agreed that a household survey would be carried out within the Fernaig Community Trust area. The purpose of the survey was to identify primarily employment and housing needs and included additional information. It was developed in conjunction with the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust. A copy of the questionnaire is included at Appendix I.

Addresses were supplied by the Post Office and using local knowledge, holiday homes and vacant houses (15 in total) were removed from the list. This gave a total of 66 households in the area and questionnaires were posted out in March 09. Three weeks was allowed for completing and returning and in total 22 (33%) were returned.

There is a general caveat that as the questionnaire deals with small numbers, direct comparison between questionnaire results and census information can be misleading.

1.9.2 Datazone and Census Information

These are the two main sources of statistical information about an area. Datazones were established by the Scottish Government as the key geographical statistical areas for disseminating government statistics and for supporting policy making. They have populations of between 500 and 1,000 household residents. Where possible, they have been made to respect physical boundaries and natural communities. They have a regular shape and, as far as possible, contain households with similar social characteristics. Part of the reason for their size is to maintain anonymity of population, as smaller populations would mean that information might be identifiable to individuals or specific groups.

There are constraints to the usefulness of both types of information. The datazone covers a larger area than the Trust, from Badicaul to Ardnarff, therefore including Badicaul, Erbusaig, Duirinish and Plockton. The Census information is now 8 years old and while it provides indicative information, some of it may have changed considerably since its collection. The Highland Council were able to provide more up to date information only at datazone level and not at census level.

1.9.3 West Highlands and Islands Local Plan Draft Deposit 2008

The plan which is at draft stage sets out the Council's policy for land use. It will guide development and investment in the area over the next few years. Its main themes are based on accommodating the growth in population sustainably by enabling housing, jobs, services and facilities. It also seeks to safeguard the natural and cultural heritage and environment of the area. Specifically included in this report is the information contained within the Plan on Achmore, Braeintra and Stromeferry.

1.9.4 Information supplied by Fernaig Community Trust

A considerable amount of background information was provided by the Trust to assist with this work. It included information collected for a whole estate plan requested by Highlands and Islands Enterprise from the Fernaig development officer. It was produced c.2003 and contains detailed information about the area. A history of the Trust to date including reasons for formation and challenges met along the way was also provided.

2 Population

In drawing together the socio-economic detail, the different sources of information have been used where appropriate and are referenced.

2.1 Age and gender profile

The three tables below are drawn from the results of the community questionnaire in April 2009. The census 2001 information is then presented for comparison.

Males

Age range	0-4	5-16	17-44	45-59	>60	
Number	1	4	6	5	9	25

Females

Age range	0-4	5-16	17-44	45-59	>60	
Number	2	4	6	9	5	26

Total

Age range	0-4	5-16	17-44	45-59	>60	
Number	3	8	12	14	14	51
%	5.9	15.7	23.5	27.5	27.5	

Census

Age range	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65-74	>75
%	5.7	20.6	10.6	29.8	24.8	5.7	2.8

The total population of Achmore (area used by the Census) in 2001 was 141; an increase of 17.5% on the 1991 population. Of that total, 66 were male and 75 female. In the datazone information, the population at 2008 was 655, which included 17.7% children and 6.7% 16-19 year olds.

The Local Plan estimates that the population at 2007 was 60 in Achmore village and 32 in Stromeferry. There is no estimate for Braeintra or Ardnarff, and Craig is included with the Plockton area.

The census showed that Achmore had a much lower percentage of over 65s – 8.5% compared to Highland at 16.6% and a much higher percentage of 5-14s – 20.6% compared to 12.9%. This represents a much more age-balanced community than is normal across Highland. Comparisons with percentages at Highland level underline this – Achmore had 20.6% of population aged 5-14; at Highland level this was only 12.9% and age range 25-44 was 2.4% higher in Achmore than Highland.

The challenge then is to try to ensure that that age balance is maintained by providing either or both access to housing and to employment opportunities.

3 Economy

At 2001, Achmore had a much higher percentage of self-employed (17.7%) compared to Highland (10.2%) and a lower percentage of limiting long-term illness – 13.5% compared to 18.4%. Both statistics point towards a healthy economic situation.

3.1 Employment type (questionnaire results)

Full-time	Part-time	Self-employed	In training	Unemployed	Retired
11	7	12	1	0	9
27.5%	17.5%	30%	2.5%	0%	22.5%

3.2 Location of employment (questionnaire results)

In order to identify employment opportunities within the Trust area, respondents were asked to state how closely to home they worked. As would be expected, the majority work outwith the Trust area. This is an indication of the lack of employment opportunities locally.

<5 miles	6-15 miles	> 16 miles
6	11	7

3.3 Sector

There is considerable information available about employment sectors. One of the drivers for the desire to develop the forest was hearing about the levels of employment in forestry in the 1950s and 1960s. None of those who returned the questionnaire are employed in forestry.

Forestry	Fishing	Con- struction	Farming	Childcare	Hospitality	Retail	Medical
0	1	4	0	1	3	3	1
Teachin g	Transpor t	Public admin	Utilities	Banking	Manu- facturin g	Creative industrie s	Other
4	0	0	3	0	0	2	5

EMPLOYMENT	Questionnaire	Census 2001	Census Highland
Percentage of the employed working in:			
Agriculture/hunting/forestry	3.7	8.5	3.7
Fishing/fishfarming	3.7	6.8	1.4
Mining/quarrying	0.0	0.0	1.3
Manufacturing	0.0	10.2	9.1
Electricity/gas/water supply	11.1	0.0	1.0
Construction	14.8	6.8	9.2
Wholesale/retail/motor vehicle repair	11.1	6.8	14.7
Hotels/catering	11.1	16.9	9.3
Transport/storage/communication	0.0	3.4	7.1
Financial	0.0	0.0	2.0

Real estate/renting/business	0.0	13.6	9.9
Public administration/defence	0.0	6.8	6.8
Education	14.8	16.9	6.6
Health/social work	7.4	3.4	12.4
Other	18.5	0.0	5.3

The fact that none of the questionnaires identified forestry workers does not necessarily mean that there are no people in the area with forestry skills.

3.4 Does current work satisfy needs? (questionnaire results)

In order to identify whether people were seeking new employment opportunities, the questionnaire asked if the current employment satisfied needs. From the results, it would appear that there is very limited desire to change employment.

Yes	No
14	3
82.4%	17.7%

3.5 Desired change to employment

Where people indicated that they were dissatisfied with their employment, they were asked what they would like to be different.

- Travel distance/time
- Work p/t; would like more work
- More money; self-employed, own boss
- Less stress

Some of the above could be addressed by self-employment opportunities within the area but this would be unlikely in the short-term at least to lead to more money or less stress.

3.6 Interest in woodland crofts

At this stage there has been no formal advertising of the opportunity to acquire a woodland croft in the area and the main information about interest in accessing woodland crofts has come through informal discussions. These have identified about 10 people who have expressed an interest in acquiring a croft. The people all live or work close to Achmore (up to 3 miles away) and are interested for a range of reasons:

- woodfuel
- green woodworking
- creating various timber products including shinty sticks
- production of material for chainsaw carving
- log-build houses (including a demonstration house and to live in), and
- fruit trees.

The second phase of this work will identify the possibilities, including creation of woodland crofts within Strome Forest and if the community view is to investigate these further, then a

structured process of identifying individuals interested in pursuing the development and acquisition of woodland crofts will be carried out.

3.7 Economic and development trends

The recent downturn in the economy has had significant effect on different aspects of the Highland economy. The level of Job Seekers Allowance claimants, which in Highland is lower than Scottish average, has risen rapidly since August 2008 and due to seasonal employment, has fallen slightly in April 09.

Tourism is one of the few benefactors of the recession, with an increase in both domestic visitors and from US and mainland Europe forecasted by VisitScotland. However, there are few tourism operators within the Trust area so benefits from this may be limited.

Social enterprises are seen as an increasingly important mechanism for providing employment and economic growth within the HIE area. They are mentioned in HIE's economic strategy as a key factor for rural areas in particular.

Public support (ie funding) for community purchase of publicly-owned assets is currently being debated and a decision has been expected for some time from the government on whether this is an appropriate use of public funds. If it is decided not to use public money to buy land or buildings owned by any public body, this may have a consequent effect on lottery funding policy.

4 Car ownership

An integral part of living in a rural community is the conjoined lack of public transport and high levels of car ownership. The community survey investigated the level of car ownership, which in reality is essential for gaining employment.

4.1 Questionnaire results

The survey demonstrated the high level of car ownership, with no respondents stating that they did not own a car.

0 car	1 car	2 cars	>2 cars
0	8	11	2
0%	38.1%	52.4%	9.5%

4.2 Changes

In 2001, 55.8% of households had 1 car, 38.5% had 2 or more cars and 5.8% had no car. The first two figures are higher than Highland or Scottish figures and the no car ownership figures is considerably lower (5.85% compared to 25.1% Highland and 34.2% Scottish), reflecting the remoteness and lack of public transport in Achmore.

From the questionnaire results, it can be seen that there is a far greater dependence on private transport than even in 2001. Achmore and area has very limited public transport and none that would enable people to work outwith the village and use public transport as a means of travel to work. This also applies the other way round, ie that people from outwith Achmore would need their own transport if they wanted to establish some business in the area.

From the comments made, it is clear that some people would like to be able to use public transport and that the Trust or the Community Council might review the opportunities for establishing a lift-sharing scheme.

4.3 Comments (questionnaire)

Could do with a bus service

Roads are kept in poor repair and dangerous to bikes - pot holes, gravel, etc

Lack of timetabling to accommodate local needs

Highland Council has no commitment to public transport shown over decades

Would love not to need cars; all needed for 3+ workers in the family

Trains - timetable changes unhelpful; roads in terrible condition

Cars work fine

Bus link Achmore to Kyle would be good

An organised car-sharing/journey-sharing scheme for the area would be beneficial

4.4 Public transport

The only provision of public transport is the railway which runs between Kyle of Lochalsh and Inverness. There is a station at Stromeferry and trains run four times a day (Mon-Sat) and twice (Sun) during the summer.

5 Housing

One of the key areas of interest for the Trust in commissioning this work was housing. It relates primarily to the link with retaining young people in an area and as Achmore and district has a higher percentage of young people than many Highland communities, it was considered important to research home ownership and views on the need for other housing.

5.1 Type of housing (questionnaire results)

Owner/occupier - 20 (90.9%)
 Rented from council - 1
 Privately rented - 1

It is clear from responses that there is a high level of home ownership in the district. This is reinforced by the results from the 2001 Census. It showed that out of the 52 households in the area, 82.7% were owner-occupied, 7.7% rented from the Council; none from a housing association; 7.7% privately rented and 1.9% living rent free.

5.2 Other housing needs

As part of the research into future needs, the questionnaire asked about housing within the next 5 years. 19 responses said no need, and 3 said there would be.

5.3 Residency

The questionnaire asked respondents about the length of residency in the area. 86% had lived longer than 5 years in the area.

<5 yrs	6-15 yrs	16-25 yrs	26-40 yrs	>40 yrs
3	4	4	7	4

The whole estate plan identified the number and reasons for people moving to the area to live in the five years up to c.2003.

No.	Age	Gender	Reason for moving in
2	18-44	m&f	?
4	3 5-18 1 18-44	m&f	Available rented accommodation
3	2 5-18 1 18-44	m&f	Available rented accommodation
1	60	f	To be near relatives
1	44-60	m	To be with partner
2	18-44	m&f	Available housing
2	18-44	m&f	To be in the area
4	2 0-4 2 18-44	m&f	Available housing
3	1 0-4	m&f	Available rented

	1 5-18 1 18-44		accommodation
2	44-60	m&f	Building site available
5	3 5-18 2 18-44	m&f	Available rented accommodation
2	60	m&f	Retiring to the area
1	45-60	m	?
2	45-60	m&f	?
2	18-44	m&f	?
1	18-44	m	Marriage
5	3 5-18 2 44-60	m&f	To start new business
2	18-44	m&f	?
1	45-60	m	Available housing
4	2 5-18 2 18-44	m&f	?
49			

It is clear from the reasons for moving to the area that affordable rented accommodation features strongly in in-migration. This links to the information sourced in the community questionnaire at 5.5 below.

The whole estate plan data also describes the number of people who moved out of the area over the same period and their reasons.

No.	Age	Gender	Reason for Leaving
1	44-60	f	To stay with relatives (ill health)
1	65	m	To stay with relatives (ill health)
1	18-44	f	To build house, near by
1	44-65	m	Separation from partner
2	18-44	m&f	Change of job
2	60	m&f	To be nearer facilities
5	3 5-17 2 18-44	m&f	To better accommodation
2	44-65	m&f	To preferred situation
5	3 5-17 2 18-44	m&f	Change of job
2	45-60	m&f	?
1	18-44	m	Change of job
4	2 5-18 2 18-44	m&f	To larger accommodation

2	18-44	m&f	Change of job
3	18-44	m&f	Short term job
2	44-60	m&f	Failure of business
2	60	m&f	Retiring
34			

There were also two deaths. There was a net in-migration of 13 people in a period of five years, a considerable increase in a small community.

5.4 *Potential residents*

The community survey asked respondents whether they knew anybody who might want to return or move into the area. This is likely to create a demand for additional housing.

Do they know someone likely to want to return?

Yes	Perhaps	no
7	3	10

5.5 *Demand for housing*

Is there more housing needed? (questionnaire results)

Yes	Perhaps	no
14	4	4

If yes, what type?

	Housing Assoc rented	Private rented	Rural Homes Ownership Grant	Affordable house plots	Shared ownership	Affordable starter homes	Crofting Grant assisted	Open market	Other
yes	9	2	9	14	8	14	8	5	1
no	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1
possible	1	7	4	0	3	2	5	4	0

At present, the combined Council and Housing Association housing list shows the following demand for Achmore:

- 23 applications for 1 bedroom property
- 8 applications for a 2 bedroom property
- 2 applications for a 3 bedroom property
- 3 applications for a 4 bedroom property

This reinforces the views of the local community, expressed via the questionnaire, that while the respondents are almost entirely housed in owner-occupied households, they see that there is an unmet demand for more housing. It should be noted that it is unlikely that these applications have named Achmore as their only desired location for housing.

5.6 *Possible locations*

The following are suggestions from the questionnaires as to potential sites for new housing. There is further information in Section 6 which has extracts from the Local Plan about

proposed locations for housing developments. In discussion with the Planning Department, they advised that the preference is for housing to remain within settlement boundaries, particularly for substantial housing developments. However, all cases are considered on a site by site basis and the matters for consideration are design, scale, siting, access and compatibility with adjacent land uses and landscape character.

Achmore

Either Achmore or Braeindra

Achmore - site from the square towards Plockton

The current 10 year plan has more than enough allocated affordable housing as there is little demand for it. It took 7 years to sell the two plots at Braeindra.

The local plan or individual applications

Stromeferry (as per new development)

Not sure

Stromeferry

Along the Glen road

Any location where adequate and meaningful consultation has been completed

Within established settlements on bus routes with services and facilities

I don't believe housing should be built too near existing homes. Up on higher ground and possibly in forest area being proposed by community buy-out would seem better but I have little knowledge about the logistics.

Housing Association rented/shared ownership - Achmore, behind schoolhouse. Affordable house plots - Achmore, Glen loop road

Stromeferry Howard Doris site; Braeindra; Strath Ascaig

As outlined by Highland Council

An additional comment about housing was that one-off housing developments in isolated area place a burden on public purse servicing the dwellers who expect more for less.

5.7 Trends

5.7.1 Prices

House prices rose steeply up until 2008, with the datazone statistics showing the median house price in 2007 as £142,000 and the mean house price was £173,848. As Highland Council trend information states, the house price to earnings ratio indicates that house prices in Highland are now less affordable than in Scotland or the UK as a whole.

5.7.2 Household numbers and types

Further trend information from The Highland Council states that the number of households in Highland grew by 7.5% between 2001 and 2006. The greatest proportional increase was in single male and one adult plus one child families. The number of dwellings in Highland grew by 6.6% in the same period. The demand for one bedroom housing in 5.5 above possibly reflects the increase in single males looking for housing.

6 Local Plan

6.1 General information and guidance

The following information is drawn from the most recent edition of the West Highlands and Islands Local Plan Deposit Draft 2008. The Plan is supportive of development proposals where they are acceptable in terms of design, scale, etc. In general, this means that there is no presumption against development; however proposals must demonstrate sensitivity and appropriateness and be considered acceptable in terms of the above criteria (as well as any others which come into play between now and the draft plan's adoption).

It forecasts significant increases in population in Skye and Lochalsh, rising by 4% from 2008 levels by 2018. Unlike Achmore and district, it is projected that there will be an increasingly aged population with a requirement for substantially increased care for the elderly. The number of households is also projected to increase by 11% by 2018.

Importantly, while the plan defines areas for development around existing townships and settlements, there is no provision in the plan for development, in particular housing, within the forest. Also, while it sets out an objective for taking advantage of Achmore's convenience for commuting to Kyle, it does not address the public transport issue.

The Highland Council Planning Department has advised that they would be able to provide guidance once any proposals were developed in more detail.

6.2 Achmore

Housing Completions 2000-2006	2
Primary School Capacity	68%
Water Capacity (allocations versus capacity)	spare capacity
Sewerage Capacity	deficiency

Objectives

- To diversify local employment to add a more active tourism sector to the traditional base of forestry and crofting.
- To take advantage of the village's convenient location for those seeking to live within commuting distance of Kyle.
- To extend the range of community facilities and housing opportunities.
- To take account of the following development factors: inadequate sewerage provision; fluvial flood risk; a potential waste water treatment plant safeguard/set back; and the prominence of northerly land from the A890.
- To safeguard locally important croft land.

Site Allocations

Site Ref.	Site Area	Location Indicative	Capacity	Developer Requirements
H	1.0	South of Forestry Houses	10 units	The access into the site will require road widening at the southern part of the village road to the standard of

				the rest of the road, contribution to development of community facilities (i.e. car park for the hall, C2) and open space (play area, C1), suitable drainage arrangements
AH	1.6 ha	West of Former Council Housing	10 units	Contribution to development of community facilities (i.e. car park for the hall, C2) and open space (play area, C1), improvement to junction with main village road and road widening to help form a safe access, path connection the site to the rest of the village, suitable drainage arrangements, screen/amenity tree planting on the southern and eastern boundaries.
C1	0.1 ha	West of Hall		Play area , the access may require road widening at the junction with the main village road.
B	0.3 ha	South of Achbeg Farm		The access may require road widening at the junction with the main village road, screening from proposed neighbouring community use.
C2	0.2 ha	North of Hall		Car park for hall

6.3 Braeintra

Objectives

- To secure a flood risk assessment for any development within the west part of the SDA neighbouring the burn and road improvements where a network deficiency is created or worsened.
- To safeguard in bye croft land quality by favouring siting on poorer parts of crofts or on common grazings where applicable.

6.4 Stromeferry

Objectives

- To take account of the following development factors: an attractive setting on the southern shore of Loch Carron; a lack of winter sunlighting; the amenity and natural heritage value of woodland that surrounds community; the steep and poorly aligned spine access; the railway bridge condition constraint; and the steep gradient of most land within community.
- To provide employment opportunities in the village via the allocation of land for small business or tourist related development.
- To encourage the completion of the restoration of the Stromeferry Hotel

Site	Site	Location	Indicative	Developer Requirements
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Ref.	Area	Indicative	Capacity	
MU	1.4ha	Old Marconi Yard	-	Acceptable Uses – community, business & tourism. Railway bridge capacity improvement, coastal flood risk assessment, contamination assessment, exceptional siting & design quality.

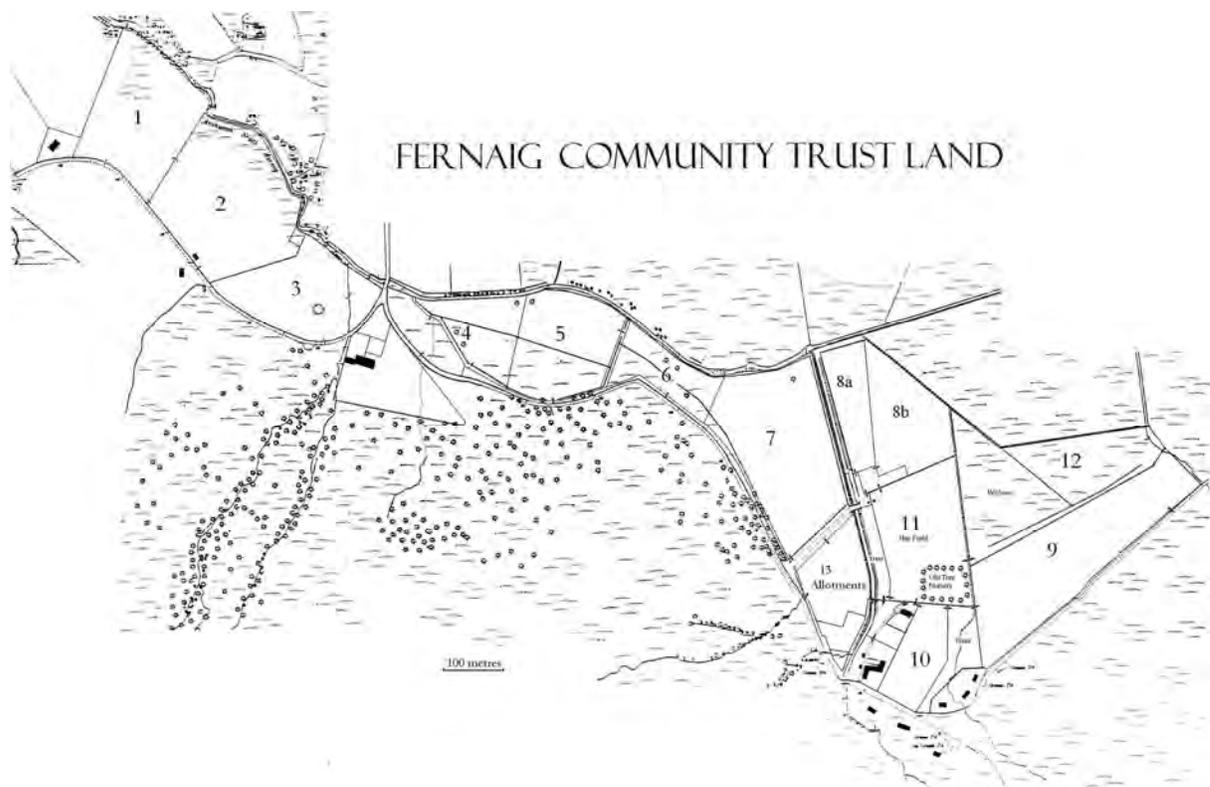
7 Land, environment and infrastructure

7.1 Land ownership

Apart from the 110 acres purchased by the Trust in 2001 (see map below), the majority of the land in the area is owned either by private estates or the Forestry Commission. Unusually for the west Highlands, there is little crofting ground and there are only two working farms and two crofts.

7.2 Fernaig Community Trust

The Trust's land is used for three principal activities – holdings, in the form of fixed term limited partnerships; allotments; and woodland.



Map 1 – Fernaig Community Trust Land

7.2.1 Woodland Grant Scheme.

There are three areas that were planted with trees under the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme in 2002.

7.3 South Strome Forest

The Fernaig Community Trust has a Concordat with the Forestry Commission, signed in 2000 and updated in 2006. It covers the whole of South Strome Forest (1,623 hectares or

4,010 acres). Coverage is 70% Sitka spruce. There is also larch, Scots pine, lodge pole pine, Norway spruce, and Douglas fir. It was purchased in 1925, and there have been plantings at all times since then.

7.4 Infrastructure

The area is served by the A890, a mostly double-track road from Auchtertyre to Dingwall. Other single-track roads run through Achmore and on towards Plockton, Achmore to Braeintra, Achmore to shore, with a link from A890 to Strome Ferry. All are in reasonable condition, but there is constant discussion by the Community Council of various deficiencies.

The railway line runs from Kyle of Lochalsh to Inverness, with a station at Stromeferry. During the summer, there is a service four times per day (Mon-Sat) and twice on a Sunday. Winter service is three times per day Monday-Saturday and once on Sunday. The school bus runs morning and afternoon through Achmore to Plockton.

There is a stone-built slipway at Stromeferry.

Utilities – electricity is supplied by Scottish & Southern Electricity, water is primarily from a public supply with a few houses served by private supplies, phone and broadband access is available but there is limited mobile phone reception. There is no mains gas.

Forestry Commission Scotland has an office, stores, deer larder and yard at Achmore. The Trust owns the former Forestry office, part of which is let to local businesses. The old Marconi Yard (see also Section 6.4) at Stromeferry is unused.

7.5 Local amenities

There is little in the way of local amenities in the area. The nearest shops and post offices are at Plockton or Balmacara (7 miles). The nearest medical and dental services are available in Kyle of Lochalsh (11 miles).

The nearest primary schools are in Auchtertyre (6 miles) and Plockton, the latter being the Gaelic-medium unit for the area. The secondary school is also in Plockton. There is some access to post-school education through the learning centre in Auchtertyre.

The main asset in the district is the Achmore village hall. Renovated in 2000, it provides the locus for most community activities including meetings, indoor sports, arts and community events.

The Trust organised the establishment of footpaths in the Strome Wood which were a popular walk for both locals and visitors. Storm-felled timber has blocked some of the paths and restoration work is needed.

7.6 Environmental and archaeological classifications

The following information is drawn from the baseline study carried out on HIE's behalf in 2002.

(i) Number and type of statutory designations (e.g. SSSI National scenic area, etc)

1 Geological SSSI
CARN A' BHEALAICH MHOIR GEO 39.20 Grid reference: NG826324

(ii) Any information or references to numbers and categorisation of archaeological / historical sites (and details of ownership)

There are 2 listed burial mounds and the remains of what is thought to be a bronze age roundhouse in Strath Ascaig.

(iv) Number and categorisation of listed buildings

There are several listed buildings in Achmore and Strome Ferry including:
Fernaig Farm Barn
Achmore Farm Farmhouse & Steading
Stromeferry Former Church of Scotland Mission Church

8 Interests/hobbies

The community questionnaire sought information about people's interests and hobbies as a means of identifying opportunities for development.

Indoor sport	Outdoor sport	Walking	Cycling	Nature conservation	Wildlife	Gardening	Crafts	Arts
5	8	18	8	9	11	20	8	6
Fishing	Camping	Riding	Youth activities	Children's activities				
4	8	5	5	4				

This information, combined with the survey carried out in 2006, would identify potential for developments of community woodland activities.

Appendix I – Community Questionnaire

FERNAIG COMMUNITY TRUST
Community Survey, April 2009

The Fernaig Community Trust is considering purchase of part of South Strome Forest for community benefit. In order to build up a picture of the community and its needs and aspirations, we/they would like your help in compiling information which will help in making a decision about whether and how to take this forward. The areas covered by the survey are Achmore, Ardnarff, Braeintra, Craig, Fernaig, the Glen, Portchuillin and Stromeferry. All questionnaires will be treated in the strictest confidence and no detail will be included in any report which can lead to identification of an individual. The survey is being carried out in conjunction with The Highlands Small Community Housing Trust.

Please note that names and addresses are not requested, although you can provide them if you wish. If you would like to get updates on the proposal, please add your e-mail address at the end of the questionnaire. **Please fill this in and return in the stamped addressed envelope provided.** Thank you very much for your assistance.

Please return by: Wednesday 15th April 2009

If you have any queries about this questionnaire please contact:
Shona MacLennan, Solas Business Services Ltd, 01599 555410, 0781 843 857,
shona@solas-biz.co.uk

1. Your household

Can you please give details below of all the people in your household who live with you in your home?

No names are required.

Household Member (with relationship to Householder e.g. Partner, wife, son etc.)	Male/ Femal e (M or F)	Age				
		0-4	5-16	17-44	45-59	60+
Householder						

2. Employment

2a. Please enter the number of people in each type of un/employment that applies.

Employed full-time employed Part-time self-employed training
 unemployed retired

2b. If you are employed or self-employed, how close to the area do you work (please tick)
 locally (within 5 miles) nearby (6-10 miles) further away within area

2c. What sector do you and household members work in? Please tick all that apply

Forestry	Fishing	Construction	Farming/crofting
Childcare	Hospitality	Retail	Medical
Teaching	Transport	Public admin	Energy/water/telecoms
Banking, insurance	Manufacturing	Creative industries	Other

2d. If you are in employment, does your work satisfy your needs? Yes No

2e. If no, what would you like to change about it? _____

3. Transport

3a. How many cars does the household own (please tick)?

0 1 2 > 2

3b. Do you have any comments about transport? _____

4. Housing

4a. What type of housing do you have?

Owner/Occupier Renting Privately Renting from Council
 Renting from Housing Association Tied House

other (please specify) _____
 _____ _____

long-term secure lease agreement

short-assured tenancy

no written tenancy

other (please specify) _____

4b. Does anyone in the household need different housing now or are they likely to in the next 5 years?

Yes No

4c. How long have you lived in the area? Please tick

> 5 years 6 – 15 year 16 – 25 year 26 – 40 year >40

5. Interests/hobbies

5a. What interests do you and other members of the household have (please tick all that apply)?

Indoor sport	Outdoor sport	Walking	Cycling
Nature conservation	Wildlife	Gardening	Crafts
Arts activities	Fishing	Camping	Riding
Youth activities	Children’s activities		
Other (please specify)			

6. Potential returners to the community

Do you know anyone with a strong local work or family connection to the area, but currently living away, who would be seriously interested in coming to live in the area if appropriate employment and/or housing was available?

Yes Perhaps No

If you wish, please give further details of the potential returner(s) in the space below:

7. Your views on any new housing to meet local needs

7a. Do you think the community would benefit from some more affordable housing opportunities being made available to meet local and/or community needs?

Yes Perhaps No

7b. What kind of new housing options, if any, would you like to see provided locally?

Housing Option	yes	perhaps	no
Housing Association rented housing			
Private rented housing			

Rural Homes Ownership Grant assisted house plots			
Locally affordable house plots			
Shared ownership/equity housing			
Affordable starter homes			
Crofter Grant assisted homes			
Open market housing			
Other (please specify)			

7c. *Where do you think might be a suitable location for any new small scale affordable housing development?*

8. *Any other comments?*

9. *Information updates*

If you would like to be kept informed about progress, please write your e-mail address here:

Thank you very much for the time and trouble you have taken to complete this questionnaire. Please return it to Solas Business Services Ltd in the stamped addressed envelope provided by Wednesday 15th April 2009.