

**BRAEMAR STRATEGIC
MASTERPLAN**

**STAGE 2 – Strategic
Options**

**September
2011**

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1. BRAEMAR STRATEGIC MASTERPLANNING PROCESS

The aim of this report is to help inform the review of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan and the future development of Braemar as a sustainable community in its own right.

The purpose is to consider sites suggested for development at the Local Development Plan (LDP) bid stage and throughout this process against the established community vision themes and produce a strategic masterplan that identifies how and where Braemar may develop into the future. The process is being managed and monitored by a group that includes the Cairngorms National Park Authority, community representatives, and landowners. Halliday Fraser Munro is acting as a central resource to pull together information that will instigate open debate amongst those parties.

The considered output of the study is a high level masterplan for Braemar with widespread agreement on its content.

This Stage 2 report:

- Expands on the key themes identified in the information gathering Stage 1;
- Examines the overall context, constraints and opportunities around Braemar;
- Identifies potential development options that could help deliver opportunities; and
- Examines these opportunities in relation to the suggested development sites from Stage 1 of this exercise.

The table and plan over have been included as a reminder of the sites identified in Stage 1 and their initial proposed uses.

Site Reference	Site Name	Initial Proposed Land Use
W1	Linn of Dee Road	Residential and business use
W2	Land adjacent to St Andrews Terrace	Community healthcare development
W3	Land adjacent to Cairnadrochit	Promoted for small-scale residential infill development
W4	Linn of Dee Place	Promoted for infill housing development
W5	Chapel Brae	Housing development and consolidating settlement boundary
W6	Chapel Brae 2	Housing development
W7	Auchendryne West	Housing development in certain areas of the site
W8	Broombank Terrace	Small scale residential infill development
W9	Cluniebank	Housing development and community facilities/ recreational
W10	Braemar West	Future housing development
E1	North of Invercauld Arms	Residential development and relocation of playpark
E2	Garage/ ambulance Depot	Future development
E3	St Margaret's Church	Future development
E4	Castleton Hall	Future development
E5	Land south of Balnellan	Residential use and tourism/chalet use
E6	Land south of Caravan Park	Residential and community use
E7	Land east of Caravan Park	Informal campsite use

Table 1 – Bid Sites

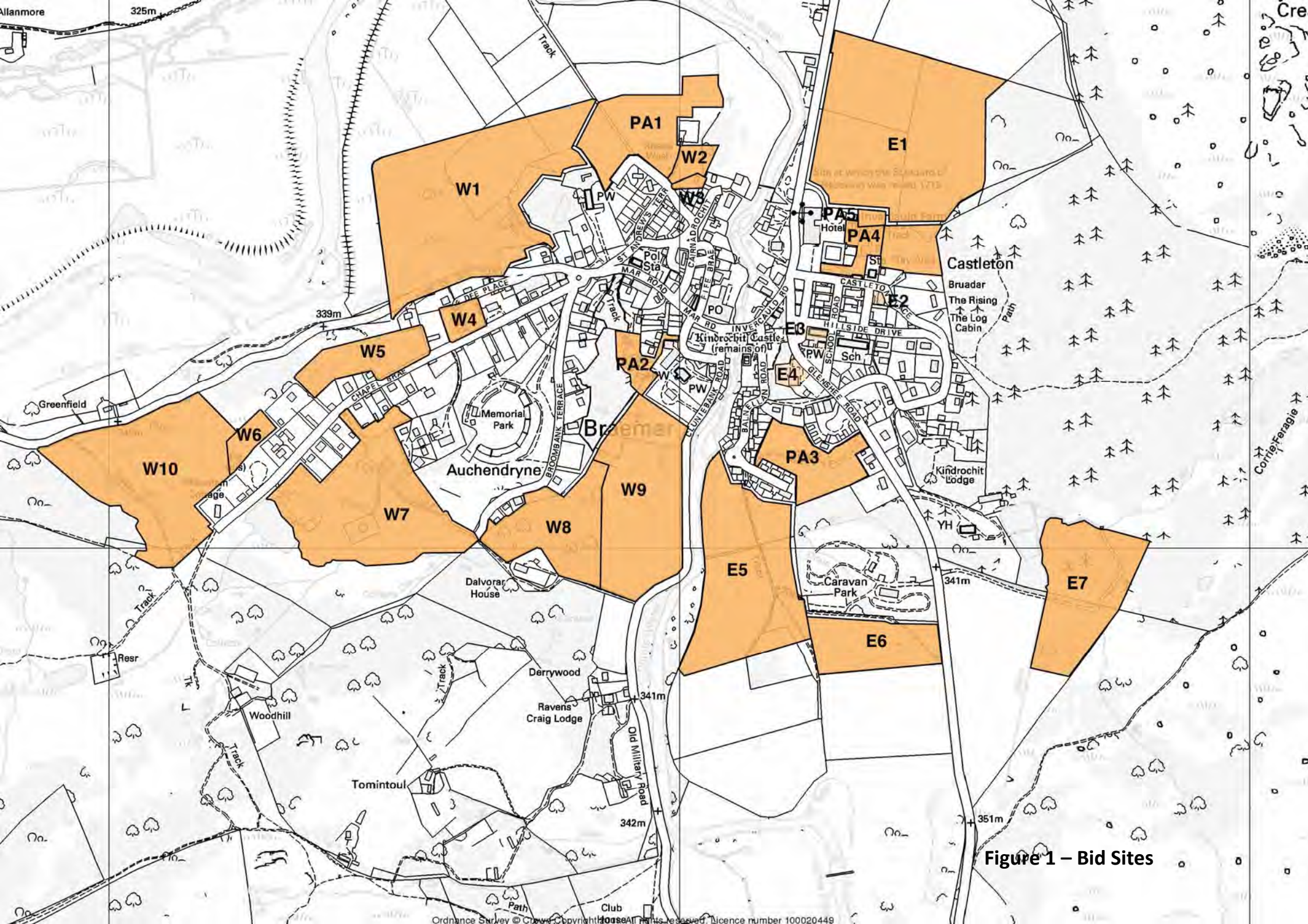


Figure 1 – Bid Sites



2. BRAEMAR IN CONTEXT

2.1 The Heart of the Park

Braemar is at the heart of the Cairngorms National Park and could, if planned and promoted successfully, become a destination that serves that role more confidently than it does at present.

Being a few hours drive from the nearest large City with limited access to larger towns and villages Braemar has to try that bit harder to encourage people to live there or visit. Nonetheless the quality of life and the quality of the built and natural environment are key strengths that should be embraced and exploited to help create the vibrant and viable community that recent community visioning events identified as being a major goal.

The current LDP review process and this high-level masterplanning exercise are opportunities to consider how Braemar's strengths could be harnessed more effectively. Thinking 5 or 10 years ahead is a prerequisite for establishing if and how projects are able to proceed. The initial stage is identifying potential projects and considering them in dialogue with the local community. This study has identified a number of initial concepts that can be detailed, altered and progressed into the future should they be considered worthwhile, viable and deliverable.



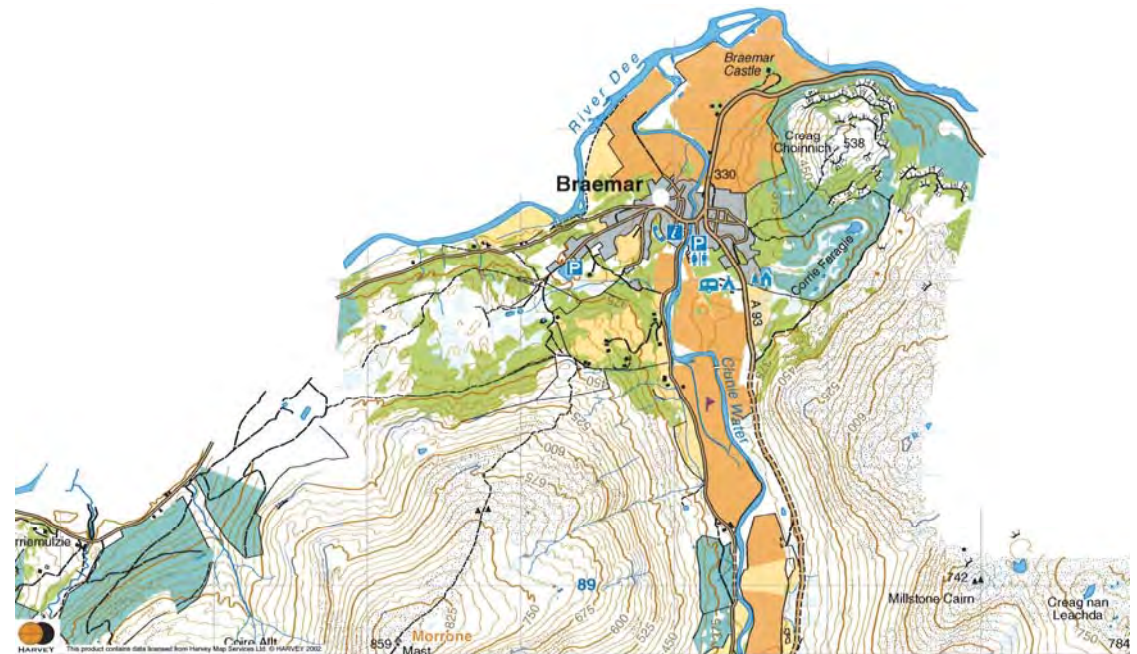
2.2 Locational Context

Braemar is fortunate to be located in one of the most beautiful and wild places in Scotland. It is the highest and most mountainous parish in the UK, all of it more than 1000ft above sea level (the village centre is at 1110ft). The area contains 24 Munros with three over 4,000ft and has the highest 18-hole golf course in the country. The Cairnwell Pass, at 2,100ft is the highest through road in the country, which (on the Braemar side) passes through the Glenshee Ski Centre.

Tourism is a key economic driver. Based around outdoor activities and the landscape tourists can experience the area through, for example:

- Wildlife tourism;
- Walking + climbing;
- Mountain biking;
- Hang-gliding;
- Skiing + snow-boarding (Glenshee Ski Resort);
- Golfing, putting + bowling;
- Field sports (stalking and shooting, brown trout and salmon angling); and
- Car/motorbike borne tourism (sightseeing).

The Braemar Gathering is an internationally recognised event, held in September, with Royal patronage. There are now over 60 events and the all-time record attendance was in 1952 with over 31,000 spectators. In 1953, Coronation year, there was a crowd of over 19,000, and since then the numbers have stabilised at around 18,000 (over 20 times Braemar's regular population of between 580 and 840 – depending on which source is used).



2.3 Built Form

The village is generally compact, interspersed with formal and informal footpaths. Roads are narrow and the character of the village is unique.

The village centre is positioned along the Invercauld Road and Mar Road with the River Dee running through the centre.

The Fife Arms and Invercauld Arms are located within the village centre and the main retail provision is situated in the Braemar Mews next to the coach park. A number of restaurants, cafes and B & B's are present along the main road through the village.

There are two churches in the village centre and the village hall located on Mar Road.





3. SITES + CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The following pages run through a series of plans that illustrate the key constraints and opportunities and their relationship with the proposed sites. Policy and designation constraints are set out in more detail in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan.

3.1 Key Policy Constraints

Figure 2 on the opposite page shows 4 of the key constraints.

Settlement Boundary – this is simply an administrative boundary that can be altered through the current Local Development Plan review. It is not a long-term physical constraint but does have a current procedural impact should the potential projects set out in this masterplan be taken forward.

Conservation Area – Almost all of Braemar is covered by the Conservation Area designation. This doesn't necessarily restrict development but requires that any development should be of a high standard and reflect the local context.

Protected Open Space – these are considered to contribute to the setting of Braemar and are to be protected from adverse development.

Notional Flood Plain – based on SEPA's flood mapping the extent of the notional flood plain does not mean that all of these areas actually flood. It is simply an indication that they may flood and further investigation would be required prior to development taking place. Nonetheless it is sensible to maintain a gap between water courses and development to help protect the water quality (especially important in relation to the River Dee SAC and its tributaries), provide an appropriate setting to them and a buffer from potential flooding.

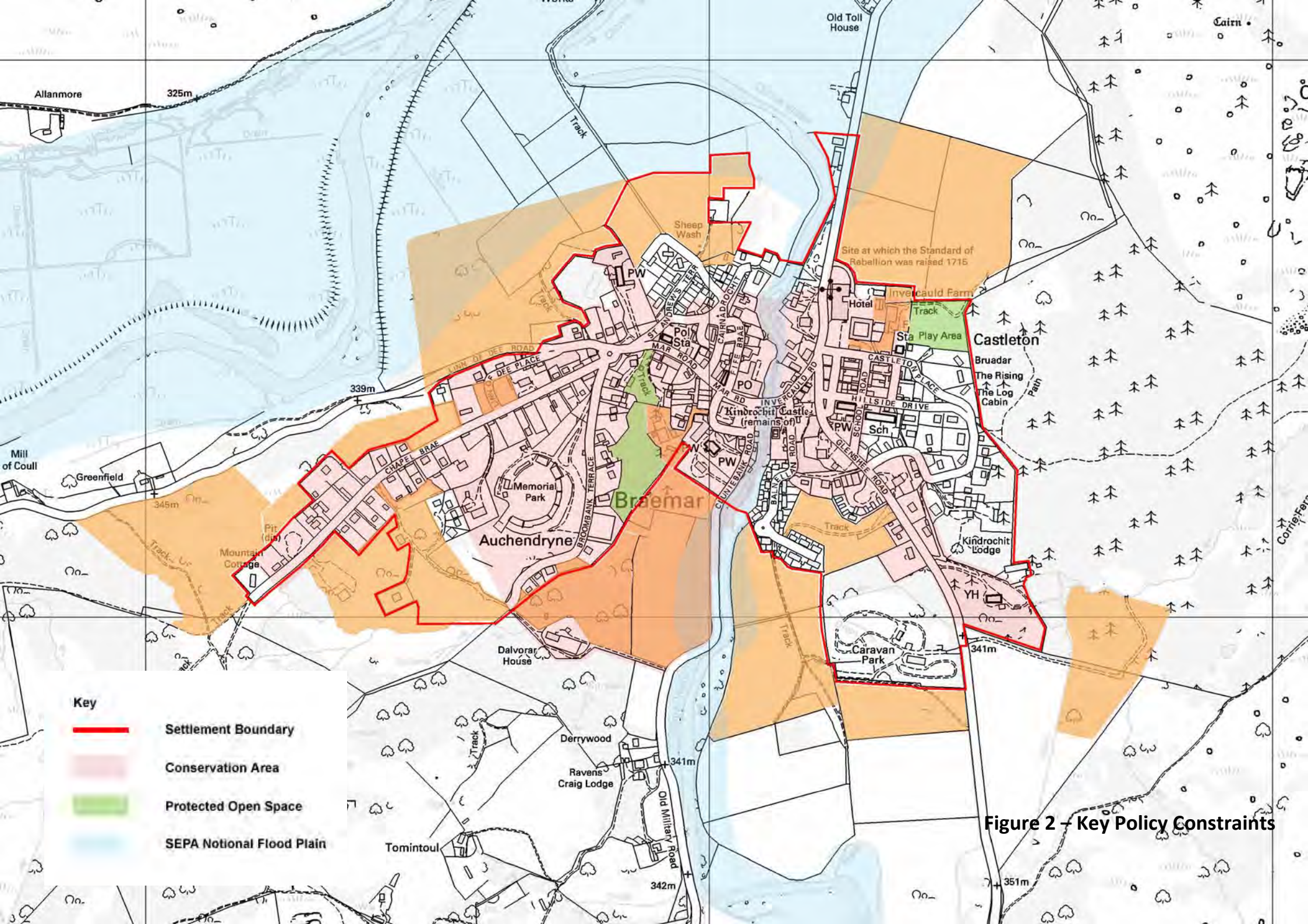


Figure 2 – Key Policy Constraints

3.2 Key Physical Constraints + Opportunities

Any future strategy for Braemar also has to consider Braemar's physical constraints and opportunities. Some are both, for example the Clunie Water, which is both an asset and a barrier to movement at the same time. Harnessing the opportunity whilst reducing the constraint is central to a successful strategy.

Main Access To + Through Braemar – there are two key access routes. The first runs through Braemar (A93) and to/from Aberdeen and Perth. That main route avoids the village centre with visitors having to turn off the A93 to reach the village centre. The other key route does run through the centre of the village providing access to Mar Lodge, Linn of Dee and Linn of Quoich plus the wild landscape beyond.

Clunie Water – The Clunie runs through the centre of the village. It is a centrepiece to the character of Braemar but is also a barrier to movement with a single vehicular east-west access. There are, however, three pedestrian routes across the river and these can help provide a pedestrian framework to future development and access strategies.

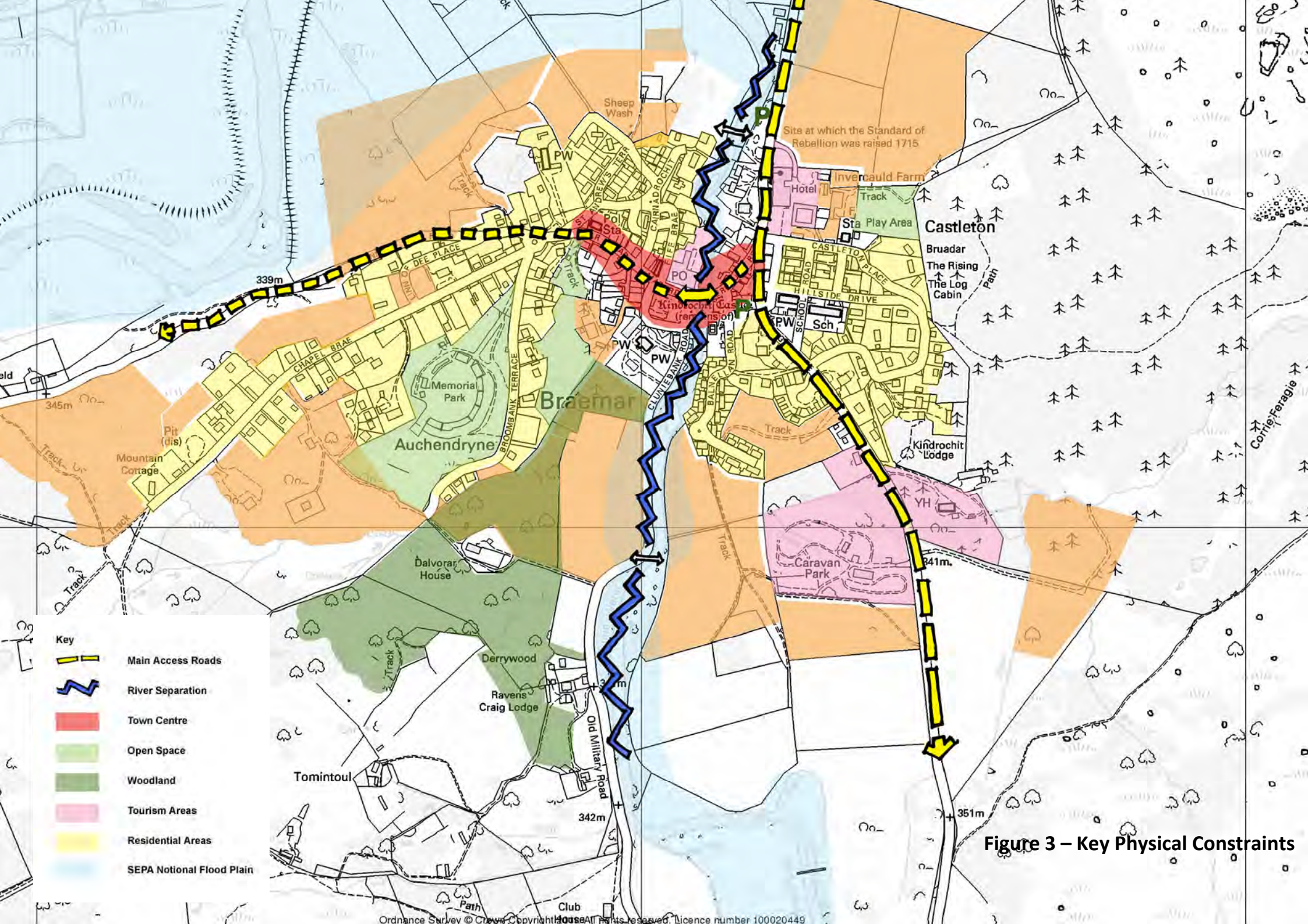
The Village Centre – this is shown on the map opposite as an elongated centre. The shops, the hotels and other town centre uses are spread out along this route. Finding a distinctive and easily recognisable village centre is therefore difficult. The location of the car parks is also an issue as the main coach park is located in the centre of the village but the main car park is located on Balnellan Road to the east of the village centre and slightly remote from

what could be considered the actual village centre. The village centre has a high quality built environment and natural setting.

Memorial Park – The Braemar Gathering is integral to the history and character of Braemar as well as its future. Memorial Park and the surrounding area are therefore extremely important in any future strategies.

Character Areas (Uses) – The plan over illustrates a number of different areas where particular uses prevail. The village centre has already been covered in this section. Other areas worth pointing out are: Tourism-based industries to the south and east of the village (Caravan Park, Youth Hostel and Hotel) and the Invercauld and Fife Arms Hotels; the woodland that runs from the centre of the village out towards Dalvorar House; housing to the west and a more mixed but still predominantly residential area to the east of the Clunie Water.

Character Areas (Street Patterns) – to the west of the Clunie Water the housing areas have built up radially along roads. Good examples of these are Chapel Brae and Broombank Terrace. The village centre and the area to the north are more dense and less linear. Similarly the street pattern to the east of Clunie Water are less linear but still demonstrate regular forms along School Road and Hillside Drive.



- Key**
-  Main Access Roads
 -  River Separation
 -  Town Centre
 -  Open Space
 -  Woodland
 -  Tourism Areas
 -  Residential Areas
 -  SEPA Notional Flood Plain

Figure 3 – Key Physical Constraints



4. STRATEGIC OPTIONS

The 8 key themes (identified in part 1 of this study) from the Community Visioning exercise have been expanded in the following table to suggest potential actions and specific projects that could assist in delivering relevant themes. Reviewing these against the opportunities and constraints will help provide direction for Strategic Options for Braemar that can form the basis of consultation and a clear strategy for the future.



Key Theme	Potential Actions	Strategic Development Options for Braemar
1. MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES LOCALLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide an increased supply of employment land (allocations) + facilities ▪ Advanced ICT + high speed broadband ▪ Increased critical mass of population/visitors to support services + businesses ▪ Improved promotion of opportunities + area by agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mountain Biking/Adventure Tourism Centre ▪ Small Business Support Centre ▪ Dedicated Business Land allocation
2. INCREASED RESIDENT POPULATION + GREATER MIX OF AGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the supply of family housing ▪ Retain housing for those wanting to remain in Braemar or looking to relocate to Braemar ▪ Improved local facilities ▪ Long-term stability of local education/employment ▪ More affordable homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional Housing sites zoned
3. AFFORDABLE HOMES TO MEET LOCAL NEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More clarity + evidence on local housing needs ▪ Allocate land specifically for affordable housing (on its own or part of a wider development) ▪ Investigate alternative means to deliver affordable homes (CNPA study and Draft Main Issues Report suggest an enabling approach is appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate % of affordable homes on above housing sites informed by a more detailed Housing Need + Demand Assessment
4. LESS HOLIDAY AND SECOND HOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate options to restrict occupancy outside of the planning system ▪ COUNTER CASE – accept that holiday homes are an integral element of Braemar + make allowance for those in the plans i.e. plan for it rather than letting it happen ad hoc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A structured provision of tourist accommodation in specific locations ▪ Examine a local mechanism to ensure resident population (existing or future) have access to new homes.



Key Theme	Potential Actions	Strategic Options for Braemar
5. IMPROVED PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES (not just to Aberdeen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the level of everyday activity/better services in Braemar leading to increased demand for public transport ▪ Discuss with public transport providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Braemar as a destination as a result of increased activity/attractions ▪ Discuss additional services with providers
6. MAINTAIN EXISTING CHARACTER OF BRAEMAR IN NEW DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce Design Framework/Code for new development ▪ Use Supplementary Planning Guidance to ensure design aspirations ▪ Relaxation of standards for road widths etc. to be agreed with Aberdeenshire Council` 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect + improve key assets (Kindrochit Castle, Memorial Park, Curling Pond) ▪ Produce a Design Framework or Design Code for Braemar as Supplementary Guidance for all development.
7. BETTER LOCAL FACILITIES/SHOPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase critical mass of population to justify/support expanded, improved or new facilities ▪ Increase critical mass of visitors to support shops + services ▪ Ensure quality offer in new facilities/shops/cafes etc. to encourage increased trade, repeat visits + to “up the game” of others ▪ Discuss the potential for links with coach holiday operators to use a wider range of local facilities more regularly + improve hotel function/quality to support more local use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reconfigure parking to support village centre + create more welcoming visitor experience ▪ Reconfigure Braemar Mews to open up garden area and create a new live frontage onto street ▪ Relocate play areas/sports facilities to take advantage of walking routes and improve path connections. ▪ Development/Community Trust to enable access to increased funding (e.g. Leader funding)
8. TOURISM TO REMAIN AN IMPORTANT ECONOMIC DRIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand Tourism offer – both the range of activity and accommodation to meet emerging market requirements ▪ Differentiate Braemar as a quality destination (USP). ▪ Accept that holiday homes are part of the tourism offer and establish how to capitalise on that ▪ Promote existing and new tourism offer more widely ▪ Discuss with Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Development International, Royal Deeside & Cairngorms DMO plus others to harness Government policy on tourism as a driver for change (Royal Deeside is one of the 6 key tourism destinations in Scotland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New campsite ▪ Mountain Bike/Adventure Centre + high profile marketing/unique events e.g. MacAvalanche at Glencoe. ▪ New access bridge across Dee at Braemar ▪ Develop relationships between hotel operators/independent retailers + service providers ▪ Accept tourism as integral and plan for more visitors (new tourist accommodation)

Strategic Option 1a) – Braemar Adventure/Outdoor Activity Centre

Braemar is an ideal location for the establishment of a Cairngorm Centre for an Adventure / Outdoor Activity Centre. Braemar is at the logical heart of the Cairngorms and there is already a well-established network of walking/cycling routes surrounding the village. Braemar is also the logical start and finish of a mountain bike ‘Tour de Cairngorm’ all of which would be off road upon existing tracks (see ‘Guide to the Cairngorm Glens’ written by Peter Koch-Davis). There are also plenty of supporting facilities within the village including accommodation, shops, and cafes. There are opportunity sites adjacent to the village, which could become the focus for an adventure / mountain centre. A Braemar Mountain Centre would be designed to compliment facilities elsewhere in Scotland. The mountain biking facility at Aonach Mor already provides a mountain bike centre of excellence, based upon out-of-season use of the Ski Centre Gondola. The purpose of this Activity Centre would not be to provide a competitive downhill course.

Braemar Mountain Centre would focus, amongst other activities, far more upon longer cross country mountain bike routes capitalising upon the world class set of pass-routes which exist around Braemar. It would be similar to the facility provided at Laggan or Glen Tress where extensive facilities have been established through co-operation between landowners and community. In 2010 the first downhill track was established at Glenshee¹ – and this offers potential synergies with a Braemar Mountain Centre.

¹ “A new blue-graded mountain bike track has recently been opened at the Glenshee Ski Centre. Access to the track is by chairlift, and costs £15/day for adults and £12/day for juniors or an adult single run is £5 and £4 for juniors. The track is open from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm, 7 days a week. Glenshee is the closest lift-assisted track to all the major Scottish cities, is midge free, has stunning scenery and has a large cafe. They have plans to develop new tracks in the future. ... The area offers a wealth of big-mountain riding in the Southern Cairngorms.”

There are already mountain adventure facilities and retail outlets in Upper Deeside. The opportunity for such businesses to relocate/co-locate/expand to provide a dedicated facility for outdoor adventure, and mountain bike events, makes considerable economic development sense.

Tourism Intelligence Scotland (on behalf of Scottish Enterprise, HIE and Visit Scotland) published a report in June 2011 – “Mountain Biking 7 Opportunities for Growth”. This gives emphasis to the significant economic development opportunity that Mountain Biking represents (see extracts over).

Opportunity Site

At the eastern end of the village between the Invercauld Arms and Braemar Castle is an opportunity site [Masterplan ref E1] that would provide a strategically located site for a Braemar Adventure / Outdoor Activity Centre. Easily accessed, well connected to roads, paths and tracks heading in all directions this site is ideally located. Its use for mountain adventure sports is a logical extension to the village envelope, providing a suitable pedestrian connection to Braemar Castle as well. The immediate surrounding topography, including Creag Choinnich, Corrie Feragie and the connecting paths and tracks, are all extremely well suited to mountain adventure sports. A site to the south east of Braemar is also being considered for the new Braemar Camp Site and the links though the forest between these two opportunities also offers considerable synergies.

Recommendation 1

Carry out a detailed feasibility study in respect of the establishment of an Adventure / Outdoor Activity Centre and the bike track connections that could be based upon such a facility. Match funding possible through Tourism Innovation Fund

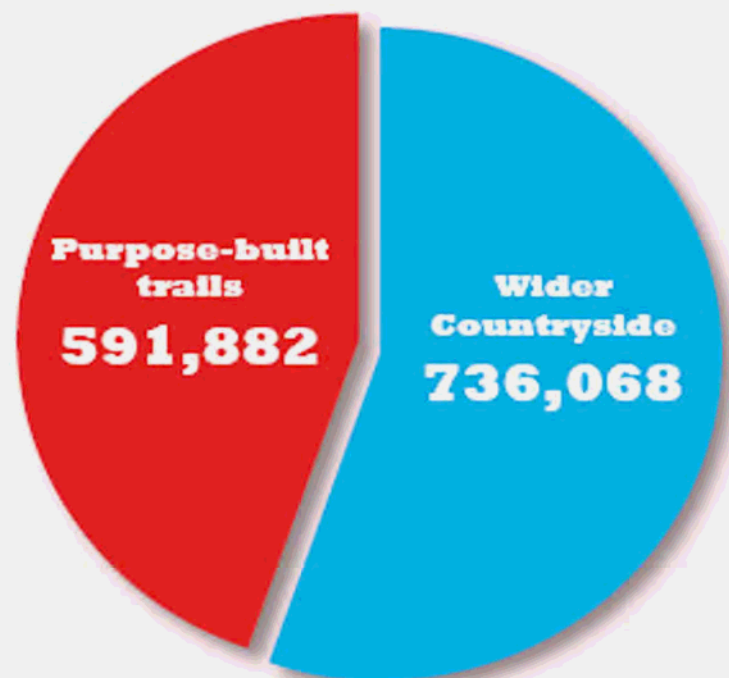


Why is it so important?

According to the 'Economic Value of Mountain Biking in Scotland' report commissioned by Scottish Enterprise, mountain biking tourism generates £46.5 million each year for the Scottish economy. This is from people who come here purely to enjoy our mountain biking product. If you count all visitors who engage with mountain biking on a trip and all of their trip expenditure, the figure totals £119 million. It's also a market set for significant growth over the next five years, with potential additional revenue of £36 million per year, which will increase the market share to £155 million. This is a fantastic time for tourism businesses to get involved.

Scotland is recognised as one of the best destinations in the world for mountain biking. The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) rates this country as a mountain biking **Global Superstar** and in 2007, we were awarded the prestigious opportunity to

ANNUAL VISITS



TOTAL MOUNTAIN BIKING VISITS 1,327,950



How to reach them

MOUNTAIN BIKE ENTHUSIASTS	LEISURE MOUNTAIN BIKERS
Promote mountain biking as the best way to experience Scotland given the sheer variety and challenge of the landscape	Promote mountain biking as part of the Scottish outdoor experience, open to everyone – not just the die-hards!
Acknowledge skills levels and individual needs	Promote that it's a way to spend time together, opening up new experiences for fun and exploration
Provide information about improving skills and meeting new personal challenges	Provide information about the wide range of trails and emphasise the accessibility of Green and Blue trails and tuition for beginners
Provide information about bike storage, washing and repair	Provide information about bike and equipment hire and how to get to the nearest trails
Direct them to trail centres for information about joining group activities and provide links to mountain bike tour operators who can organise challenging day rides, especially useful if they haven't biked in Scotland before	Direct them to trail centres for more route information, guidance and tuition

Why you should target mountain biking visitors

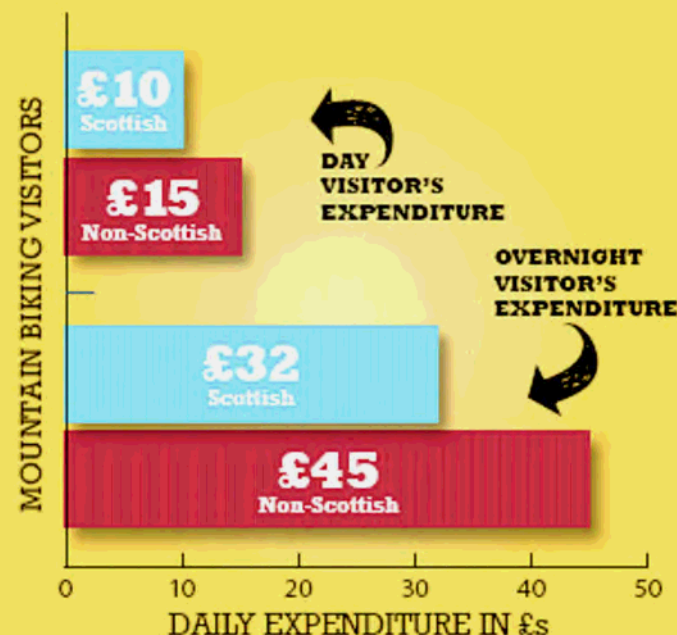
- For the same reason you would target golfing visitors or heritage visitors – because we have a world-class reputation
- It appeals across the age groups and market sectors
- It can be enjoyed as a single person or as part of a group
- It promotes physical activity, tapping into current health trends
- It capitalises on one of Scotland's best assets – our stunning scenery
- They are all-year round visitors

Visitor spend

Mountain biking visitors who stay overnight spend more than day visitors and actually account for 86% of the total spend of all mountain biking visitors.

If we can make it easier for day visitors to stay overnight, or encourage all visitors to stay longer, local businesses will reap the benefits.

The graph shows the average daily expenditure when mountain biking is a main motivation for a trip



Source: Economic Value of Mountain Biking in Scotland commissioned by Scottish Enterprise, April 2009

Strategic Option 1b) – Business Start-up/Support Facilities

The second option is one that would support small-scale business start-ups or the expansion of existing local businesses. There is little scope for large-scale business relocating to Braemar but smaller businesses would benefit from a central facility that can provide support in the form of communal meeting rooms, administrative facilities and support, and flexible business space. These types of business support units exist throughout Scotland supported by Scottish Enterprise and Local Enterprise Trusts.

Scotland's Enterprise Trusts

The Enterprise Trust model was originally established in the early 1980's in an environment when the Scottish economy was undergoing significant change. Traditional industries were all in decline. This had significant impact on local communities and the Enterprise Trusts were established as locally led initiatives across Scotland to support the regeneration of these communities through focusing on small businesses. The Enterprise Trust model incorporates the following characteristics:-

Core activity: encouraging & supporting entrepreneurial activity, creating a steady stream of successful new businesses and supporting the development of established Small to Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) generally of size of up to 25 employees.

Ethos: adding value for SMEs locally through the experience and knowledge of their Boards of Directors drawn from both the private and public sectors.

Role: Acting as market makers in service provision and in doing so working with the private sector.

Role: Engaging with the private sector locally and nationally in the development of new and established SMEs.

The Enterprise Trusts are run as a business that reinvests any surpluses in services for the benefit of clients (In this case locally based businesses). They have a direct local focus with a long term commitment to the area they serve. In Braemar we see the involvement of both estates and local businesses as key to making such a model work.

Other models for community based local support exist e.g. the Comrie Development Trust. An additional benefit of a community trust model is the access to potential funding mechanisms for feasibility work and direct funding of developments that deliver positive community results.

Recommendation 2

Consider the Enterprise Trust and Community Development Trust mechanisms to provide targeted local business support + access to potential funding assistance.

Business Start-Up/Support Facilities

We see this manifesting itself as a single building with central resources that can be used by local businesses but also includes flexible business space. There are existing buildings that can be developed for this use. Two of these are:

a) Castleton Hall

This is the obvious choice, set out as it is with a variety of flexible spaces and smaller rooms. It has dedicated parking and outdoor space that could allow tourism/outdoor based businesses to use this for storage, try before you buy experiences or corporate/promotional activities. It also sits on the main A93 through Braemar.



b) St. Margaret's Church

This is a less obvious choice but one that could provide a unique venue. It would require greater intervention into the built form than Castleton Hall and is less flexible in many ways.



Recommendation 3

Investigate the opportunity/options and potential market for Business Start Up/Support facilities in conjunction with Scottish Enterprise.

Strategic Option 2 – Housing Sites

One of the key goals that can be identified from the community visioning exercise is increasing the resident population of Braemar. The extent of remote ownership and local use/ownership of housing in Braemar is difficult to determine but, anecdotally, it has been suggested that 50% to 60% of Braemar’s housing are second or holiday homes. This has been considered across a number of parties to be, at least partially, the cause of many of the difficulties in retaining or attracting services locally and the ability for local people to find and afford local housing. We haven’t seen any evidence to back this up as part of this study but it would be logical to suggest that if a large number of houses in any locality are not being used except over a few weekends every year, then it will impact on how people perceive Braemar, the ability of local facilities to remain viable all year round and, inevitably, house prices.

Other societies have a different attitude to second homes. That issue is covered later in this report but in Norway in particular second homes are commonplace.

Although there are a number of existing housing consents in Braemar that can be delivered in the short-term we have to look at the medium to long-term to establish potential development options. This is difficult as there is no real evidence of housing need and demand in Braemar.

In the meantime we have identified a range of sites that could be developed for housing based on the following principles:

Recommendation 4

Carry out a Braemar specific housing study to establish fuller picture of housing demand. Extend the evaluation nationally - who would like to live in a national park? Are there any barriers for those that do?

- A. That commercial sites/developments could be supported/cross-funded through new housing development. Some housing sites could be considered as enabling development.
- B. That the housing on these sites would be subject to a voluntary but agreed procedure that offers a proportion of the housing to locals or those wishing to relocate permanently to Braemar.
- C. That a certain level of affordable homes on these sites are cross-funded by the sale of other housing on the open market.
- D. These sites may be phased over the next 10 years.
- E. That holiday homes will be planned for alongside homes for locals but in specific areas or proportions.

Recommendation 5

Allocate housing sites in specific areas (to be agreed) in line with the above assumptions.

Strategic Option 3 – More Local Need Housing

This is more difficult to achieve through a formal planning-based process.

Braemar, however, is in a unique position of having most of the potential development land in the ownership of the two land holding estates. This offers the opportunity for an ownership controlled mechanism, separate from planning controls, that offers a proportion of any new housing to locals first. A mechanism of this type will also require a percentage of housing on any particular site to be offered for sale without restriction on ownership.

To allow for a mechanism of this type enough land has to be allocated for housing through the Local Development Plan process.



Recommendation 6

Investigate a land ownership based mechanism to restrict a proportion of new housing for locals or full-time residential occupation.

Strategic Option 4 – Structured Provision of Tourist Accommodation

a) Camping

Efforts are being made at present to examine how Braemar can best serve the tent camping and caravan demands. The existing caravan parks are good and well used but operators will always look for improvement in terms of space, facilities, and of course patronage.

In parallel to this there has been a long running saga of inadequate provision for tent camping exacerbated by uncontrolled, car boot camping on the Clunie Flats south of Braemar on the way toward Glenshee. This has been quite rightly categorised as not being wild camping as defined by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. In Loch Lomond, in response to similar problems a decision to implement Bylaws has been taken in the absence of making additional provision available in formal camping sites.

The answer to the Clunie Flats problem has always been the provision of a good camp site facility within Braemar itself. This facility need not be luxurious, in need not provide electric hook ups or metalled roads/pitches, but it should have good facilities and overnight costs should not be too dissimilar to local bunkhouse accommodation. The CNPA have appointed Tourism Resource Consultants to examine where a suitable site within Braemar could be provided and this presently seems to be a site at the south east edge of Braemar, close to the Youth Hostel and close to the Caravan park. This is a good location for such a facility and with good patronage it will add to the critical mass for other facilities within the village. It will also prove attractive to the outdoor camping market simply because of its proximity to other facilities in the village. Once the camp site facility is up and running

any persistence of the Clunie Flats problems would then be susceptible to bylaws, if deemed necessary.

There is also an opportunity to link the Caravan Park, the Camp Site and the Adventure / Outdoor Activity Centre with a footpath/cycle path link. This could also be associated with strategic woodland planting which would help to define the southern edge of the village.

b) Holiday Homes

As indicated in previous sections anecdotal evidence suggests that of Braemar's 362 households (*source – Braemar Housing Needs Analysis May 2007*) over 50% are either second or holiday homes and this is considered by many to be a problem for Braemar. But is it really a problem? Other countries don't see it this way and have accepted holiday homes as an integral part of life and culture.

Lesley Riddoch (Scottish broadcaster, journalist and commentator) is currently comparing the cabin traditions of Scotland and Norway in a PhD jointly supervised by Strathclyde and Oslo Universities. Her findings to date have shown that more than half the Norwegian population has access to a *hytte* (or hut) for relaxation, connection with nature, exercise, escape from city pressures and strengthening family ties. Some of these second homes are luxurious but many are very basic wooden huts.

Hiking, fishing, skiing and hunting are key elements of the Norwegian ideal to lead a simple life outdoors. That ideal is made possible by having access to a second home. Norway is one of the world's most equal societies, but having a second home isn't regarded as elitist, greedy or wasteful. The *hytte* is the permanent family home – in contrast to "temporary" first homes that change

many times over a lifetime to suit the changing demands of work, family and finance.

In the rest of Scandinavia and across the Northern latitudes the same cultural approach to cabins exists. In 1991 there was one cabin per 12 Swedes, one per 18 Finns and one per 33 Danes along with relatively widespread cabin ownership in Russia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain and other parts of central and Southern Europe as well as the northern states of America and Canada.

Scotland, however, has the lowest rates of second home ownership in Northern Europe. There is one holiday home for every 173 Scots (perhaps one per 200 since so many are owned by non Scots.) In Scotland, unlike Norway, second homes are generally regarded as elitist and problematic. (Source: Lesley Riddoch, "Huts in Scotland and Norway", August 2011 – lesleyriddoch.co.uk)

Braemar stands out from most Scottish locations as it seems to have a higher than average proportion of second and holiday homes, reflecting the quality of environment and life it offers and its history.

Having examined the limited factual evidence and considered the local anecdotal evidence we believe that any future approach to housing will need to consider how to tackle the very real demand for holiday homes in Braemar. It will also have to balance that need against delivery of homes for permanent occupation. Tourism is a key element of the economy of Braemar and should be welcomed in a more structured form.

The key elements of a future housing strategy should:

- Accept the need for holiday homes and provide for these in any future land allocations; and
- Direct them to specific locations or in limited numbers in other housing developments;



Recommendation 7

Identify areas suitable for specific tourism related uses (campsite & holiday homes) and investigate the mechanism for restricting these to agreed limits in mainstream housing development (probably through conditions)

Strategic Option 5 – Additional Public Transport Services

There is very little that a strategic development option study such as this can recommend as a physical intervention to help support this option. The more demand there is for public transport the more likely additional services will come forward.

Braemar therefore has to create more demand, demonstrate that demand to public transport providers and persuade them that further public transport services would be worthwhile and viable. Many of the physical projects suggested in this study could help create demand (a “bike bus” from Aberdeen for example to service the proposed Adventure / Outdoor Activity Centre).

Strategic Option 6 – Design Framework/Design Code

a) Landscape

There is a tremendous landscape setting to the village comprising Dee Valley, Clunie Flats, Morrone, Creag Choinnich and the wider distant views to the higher hills, especially Carn Na Drochaide and Beinn A' Bhuid to the north.

However, there is still the opportunity to enhance the setting further. Strategic landscaping in connection with the orbital and through path routes would add to the landscape setting. We see one key intervention being to the south of the caravan park and to the north of the golf course where new woodland planting would help define the southern edge of the village.

b) Design Code/Framework

Braemar has a distinctive character that would benefit from a set of design rules that would help shape future development projects. A Design Code (or a more loosely defined Design Framework) is a set of illustrated design rules and requirements that provide the basis for the physical development of a site or area.

In Braemar's case the design rules could guide building heights, the use of materials, landscape requirements, what type of road is appropriate, how pavements are to be treated and other design issues that define the existing character of the village. This approach has benefits across the board – see table over (*source – Urban Design Compendium 2 – Delivering Quality Places for English Partnerships*) and knock-n benefits for the delivery of specific projects.

Stakeholder	
Landowner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can help optimise return from land • Provides certainty on design quality of scheme
Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides certainty on design requirements at the outset • Planning approvals usually obtained quicker for compliant schemes • Provide assurance that later schemes will be of similar design quality • Can help optimise return from development
Local authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that development satisfies community aspirations • Provides certainty on design quality of scheme
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that development achieves the aspirations of the masterplan • Provides certainty on the design quality of the scheme

Table 3.4 Benefits of Design Codes

Strategic Option 7 – Braemar Public Facilities

A number of public facilities would be could be improved as a result of the proposed development projects.

a) Play Park

There is a good play park space located to the rear of the Invercauld Hotel. It is a good space, but in a peripheral location. The playground kit is of a ‘certain age’ and probably in need of renewal, and play surfaces are not presently used.

To us as masterplanners, it seems reasonable to consider relocation of this facility to a more central location within the village. We are aware of the relationship to Braemar Primary School, but we believe that a relocated facility could be just as accessible to the school and provide better facilities.

The original play park could quite legitimately be considered for residential use.

b) Aberdeenshire Council Car Park

Immediately to the north of the Invercauld Arms Hotel and on the other side of the A93 is an area of low ground set out as a car park by Aberdeenshire Council. Our observations on site visits has shown that this car park is very little used. We believe the site to have development constraints (unless on stilts) because it is affected by flood risk from the Clunie. However, there is a bridge over the Clunie immediately to the west of this car park that provides a strategic link in terms of cycling and walking routes. It is a strategic location and offers significant opportunity in relation to the Adventure/Outdoor Activity Centre (across the road) and the proposed new suspension bridge over the Dee. Whilst the Linn of Dee car park and Glen Quoich car park offer trailhead car parks for walking and mountain biking, this car park would provide a very

attractive alternative to those with less ambitious objectives in mind, or setting off with young families. There is the added bonus of being immediately adjacent to excellent facilities of the village centre.

c) Village Centre Car Park/Coach Park

To the immediate south of the village centre, and immediately to the west of the main Clunie bridge are two vehicular parking facilities (one coach parking, the other car parking). The car park includes public toilets.

These services serve the village very well, but with a little alteration the benefits could be enhanced. The relationship to the Fife Arms, to the Courtyard Steading building & shopping arcade and to the rest of the village are not especially attractive and could be considerably enhanced in townscape terms. One option would be to swap the parking arrangements around so that visitors could park their cars in the village centre rather than off-centre. This would offer the opportunity to “open out” the Courtyard and achieve better legibility, better permeability – all of which would be good for visitors and good for business.

d) New Playground and Sports Pitch

Immediately to the south of the car park/coach park area are the Kindrochit Castle Site and the connection via Cluniebank Road to a significant area of open space to the south of the village. We are aware that these ‘Clunie Flats’ are susceptible to flooding and are thus always unlikely to be developed. We suggest that this is the best location for a significant area of open space or parkland, connected by public road and orbital footpaths to other parts of Braemar. The southern bridge over the Clunie is located at this locus. The land on the west bank of the Clunie would be ideal for a relocated playground (mentioned previously) and sports pitch (shinty/football/hockey).

Strategic Option 8 – Tourism Promotion & Facilities

Many of the proposed interventions suggested by this draft framework are based on attracting more tourists to Braemar. The clear target has to be creating a wider seasonal appeal across a range of tourism opportunities. New holiday homes (rather than second homes) will encourage more week/fortnight long trips and an almost year round occupation of these houses. In turn this will help support local services and facilities.

New activities such as the adventure / outdoor activity centre can encourage a wider range of tourists across a broad spectrum of ages and activities. Evidence from elsewhere in Scotland has proven that a targeted approach to this type of adventure sport can be successful. The centre itself could house many different types of facilities – café, bunkhouse, bike repairs, conferencing, a place to gather for other events, a cross-country skiing or hiking base in the deep winter months, water sports ... the list could go on.

This type of centre, however, requires support from a number of agencies to help it succeed. Scottish Enterprise, VisitScotland, Royal Deeside & Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation are the three that immediately come to mind. If the centre is considered worthwhile and built then a strong promotional campaign would be needed to get it onto the radar of potential users.

This study also recommends additional tourism accommodation in the form of a new campsite and holiday homes. A new and concerted effort is required to establish the statement that Braemar wants to make and who it wants to listen. It needs a consolidated image modern pastimes that fit the historic context and long-standing traditions) not a new one. History is part of its

success and needs to remain a key part of the tourism offer but it also needs to branch out to reach new audiences.

Recommendation 8

Initiate discussions with Scottish Enterprise, VisitScotland and Royal Deeside & Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation to garner support and establish a strategy to promote tourism in Braemar.

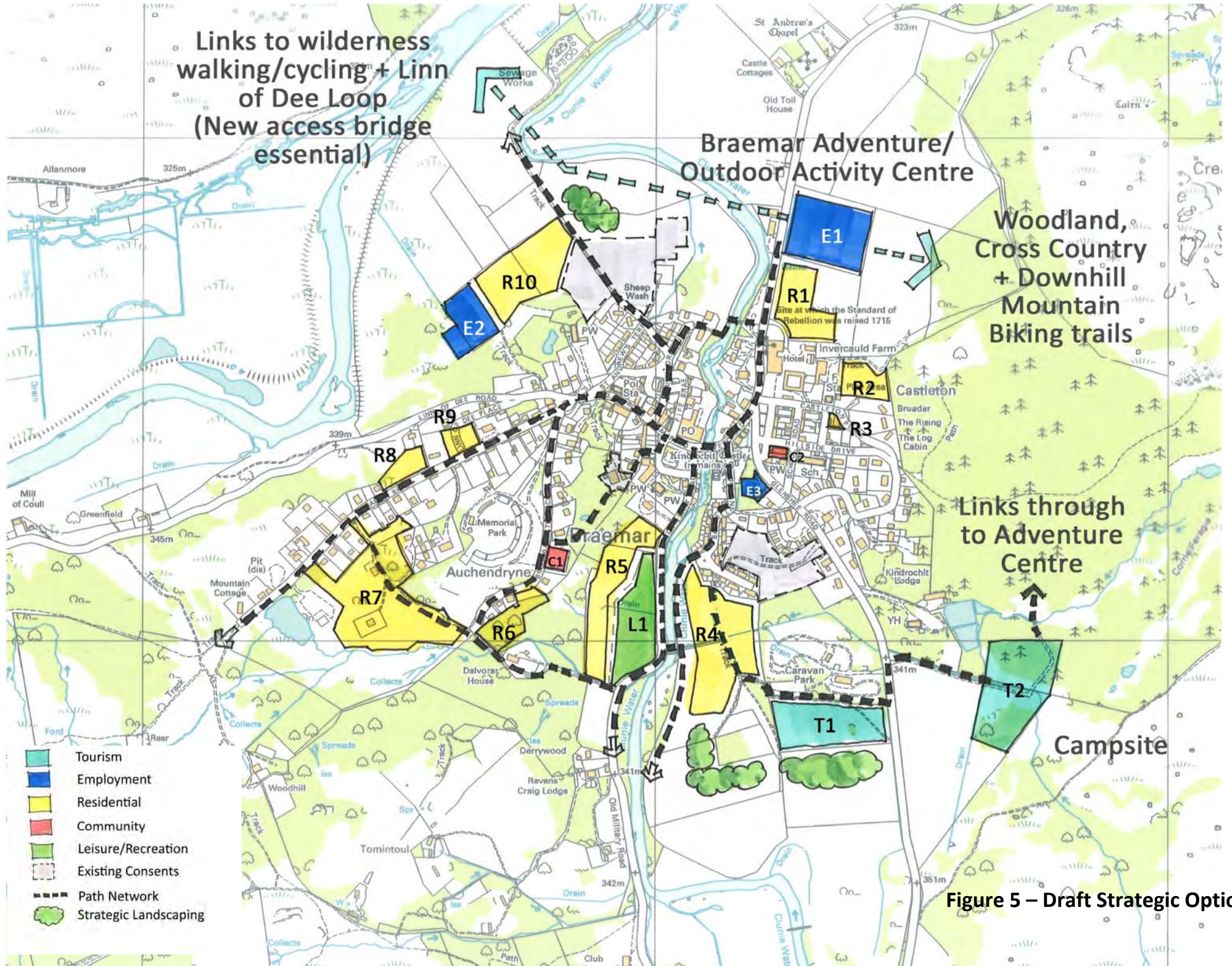


Figure 5 – Draft Strategic Options

Original Site Reference	New Site Reference	Site Name	Initial Proposed Land Use	Strategic Options (for discussion/consultation)
W1	R10/E2	Linn of Dee Road	Residential and business use	R10 – extension to existing consented development E2 – Business Space accessed from Linn of Dee Road
W2	None	Land adjacent to St Andrews Terrace	Community healthcare development	Site no longer required
W3	None	Land adjacent to Cairnadrochit	Promoted for small-scale residential infill development	Considered infill with potential for small-scale development
W4	R9	Linn of Dee Place	Promoted for infill housing development	Infill Housing - limited scale
W5	R8	Chapel Brae	Housing development and consolidating settlement boundary	Infill Housing - limited scale
W6	None	Chapel Brae 2	Housing development	-
W7	R7	Auchendryne West	Housing development in certain areas of the site	Housing
W8	R6	Broombank Terrace	Small scale residential infill development	Housing - infill (low density)
W9	R5 L1	Cluniebank	Housing development and community facilities/ recreational	R5 – housing – limited to upper levels of the site to avoid flooding L1 - Relocated play park tying in with path loop network and pedestrian bridge over Clunie Water.
W10	None	Braemar West	Future housing development	This is considered to be much longer-term and may be included for consultation if appropriate.

E1	E1/R1/R2	North of Invercauld Arms	Residential development and relocation of playpark	<p>E1 – Braemar Adventure / Outdoor Activity Centre or equivalent tying in with neighbouring mountainside / woodland (Creag Choinach) and wider wilderness area via new bridge to Linn of Quoich / Linn of Dee loop.</p> <p>R1 – Housing fronting onto road + area behind but avoiding most steeply sloping areas of the site.</p> <p>R2 – Relocation of play park to L1. Site then used for additional housing.</p>
E2	R3	Garage / Ambulance Depot	Future development	Limited scale brownfield development for housing (not employment).
E3	C2	St Margaret's Church	Future development	Community Uses – difficult as a result of listing but a resource worth considering for future community use.
E4	E3	Castleton Hall	Future development	Small Business Centre supporting business start ups (shared resources etc).
E5	R4	Land south of Balnellan	Residential use	Housing set back from Clunie Water.
E6	T1	Land south of Caravan Park	Tourism / chalet use	Extension of Caravan Park / Chalets.
E7	T2	Land east of Caravan Park	Informal campsite use	Campsite.
-	C1	Curling Pond	-	Refurbish for use + include Games Centre as part of the community / social aspect at Memorial Park.
-	Path Loop Network	Various	-	Formalise path loop network using signposting + interpretative panels at key points.