

Cairngorms National Park
Local Development Plan 2015
Development Brief: Aviemore Highland Resort



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INTRODUCTION

The Aviemore Highland Resort (AHR) is large site extending to approximately 40 Hectares in the centre of Aviemore (see Context map overleaf). It currently has a range of different uses including hotels and holiday accommodation, retail, recreation and housing and has undergone significant development in previous years to create the resort it is today.

Outline planning permission for the site was approved in 2011 for the construction of a mixed use development comprising residential, retail, office, community, leisure, environmental improvements, roads, additional lodges and hotel extension. This permission was not implemented, however AHR continues to provide a significant opportunity to support and improve the vitality of Aviemore.

ABOUT THIS DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

This Development Brief has been prepared to guide the development of AHR. It aims to provide a land use and development framework to inform the preparation of more detailed proposals.

This brief does not seek to prescribe exacting design standards but identifies development objectives and layout principles for the site taking into account its context along with relevant local and national guidance.

Due to the scale of the site, this brief contains an overarching masterplan (page 3) with more detailed guidance for individual parts of the site (pages 4 to 7). Additional guidance on design, natural heritage, transport and developer obligations is provided on pages 8 to 11.



View of Aviemore and the Highland Resort from Tulloch Ghru



MacDonald Highland Hotel against a backdrop of Craigellachie



Spey Valley Leisure Arena



Open space and play area with woodland lodges in the backdrop

CONTEXT MAP



Aviemore is the largest settlement within the Cairngorms National Park and a key service centre for Badenoch and Strathspey.

AHR is located adjacent to the town centre, which has a good range of retail outlets and services including a supermarket. There is a train station a short walk from the site with regular rail services to both Inverness and Edinburgh / Glasgow.

In addition, there are bus stops in the town centre providing services to other local settlements as well as Inverness and Edinburgh / Glasgow.

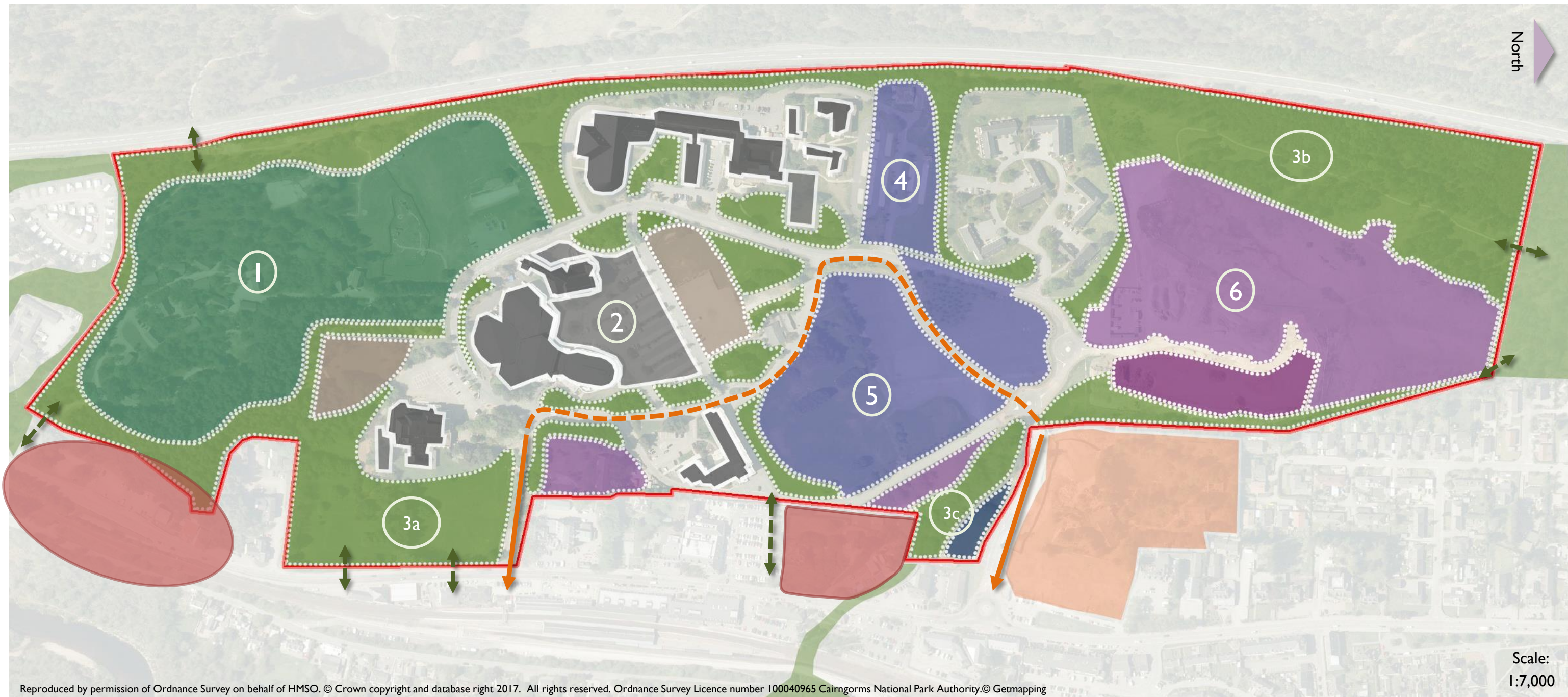
There is an extensive network of core paths and active travel routes in and around AHR connecting to Aviemore and its surroundings. Craigellachie National Nature Reserve lies immediately to the west of AHR and can be accessed from under the A9 directly from the site.















Aviemore Medical Practice also lies in close proximity to the site and the NHS are currently progressing a project to develop a new hospital in Aviemore which will provide central medical facilities for Badenoch and Strathspey. A preferred site for the new hospital has been identified as shown in the map above. There is also a Primary School which is a short walking distance from the site.

Site C1 on the map is identified in the current Local Development Plan (2015) for the provision of new community uses.

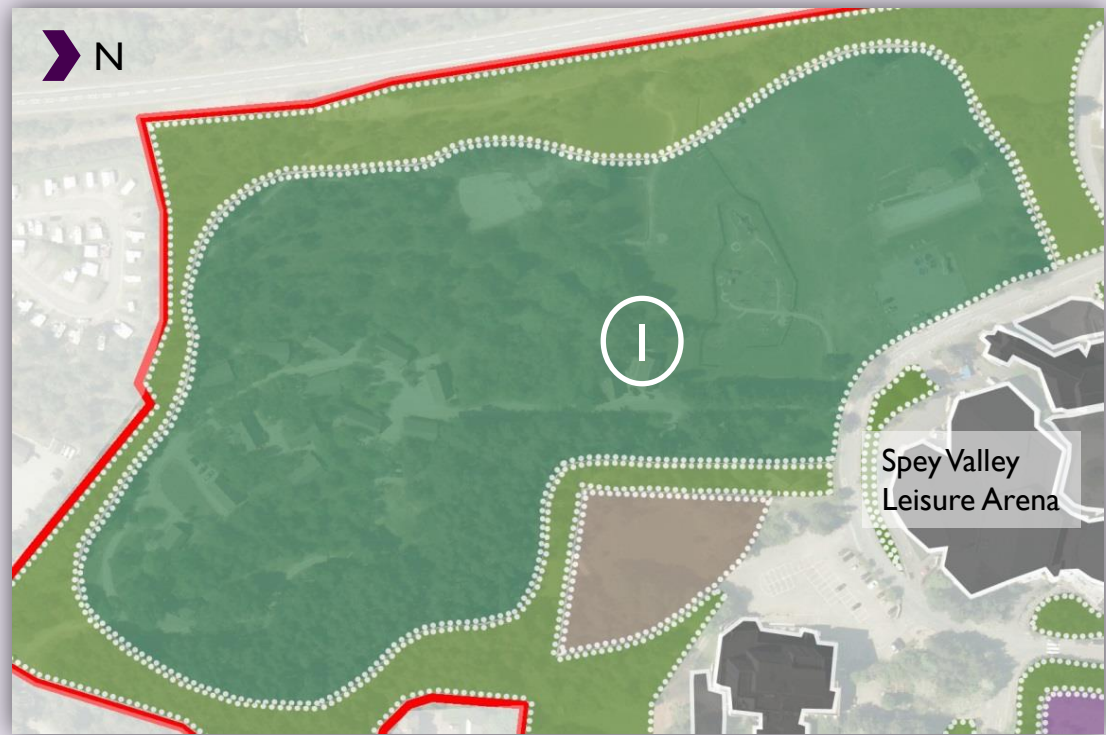
The A9 dualling is a major project which has the potential to affect the site over the short term. A final route has not yet been agreed for this section of the A9, however it is not anticipated that it will deviate significantly from its current route and impacts to the site are likely to be limited to along the western edge.

OVERVIEW PLAN



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
|  Woodland lodges |  Residential development |  New Retail Park: Aviemore Retail Park |
|  Green networks and linkages |  Existing residential development |  Central link road through the AHR |
|  Existing buildings |  Mixed use development |  Pedestrian and non-vehicle access into and out of the site |
|  Proposed extensions to existing buildings / hotels |  Commercial development |  Numbers refer to detailed guidance for individual sites |
|  Proposed car parks |  Potential mixed development areas adjoining the site | |

DEVELOPMENT AREA GUIDANCE



I. WOODLAND LODGES

There is potential capacity for the careful siting of additional lodges within the existing woodland along with further woodland expansion in Area 1.

Any further lodges must be sensitively sited within the woodland, minimising the need for woodland removal and ensure the protection and enhancement of existing waterbodies on the site. They should be no higher than 2 storeys, consistent with the existing lodges and should not detract from the character of the woodland and surrounding area.

Woodland is a key structural element in the AHR landscape and Aviemore as a whole. Opportunities to retain and expand woodland in Area 1 should be maximised wherever possible, particularly where this would enhance and connect the network of greenspaces throughout the site and support biodiversity.

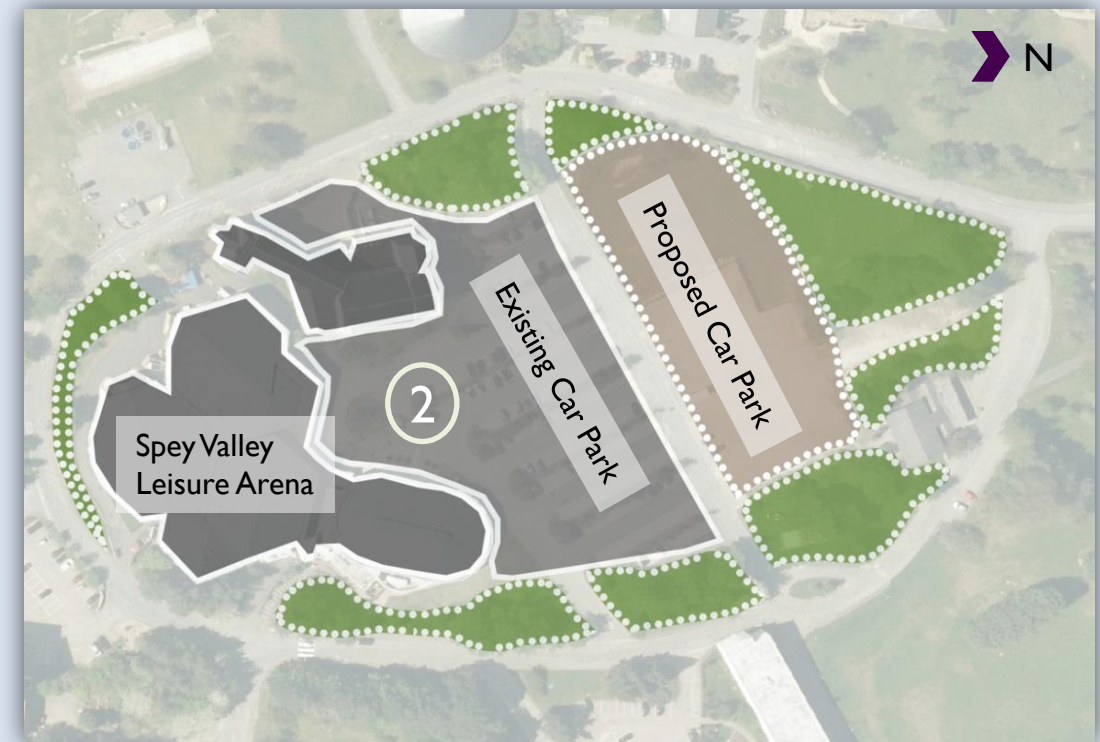


2. SPEY VALLEY LEISURE ARENA

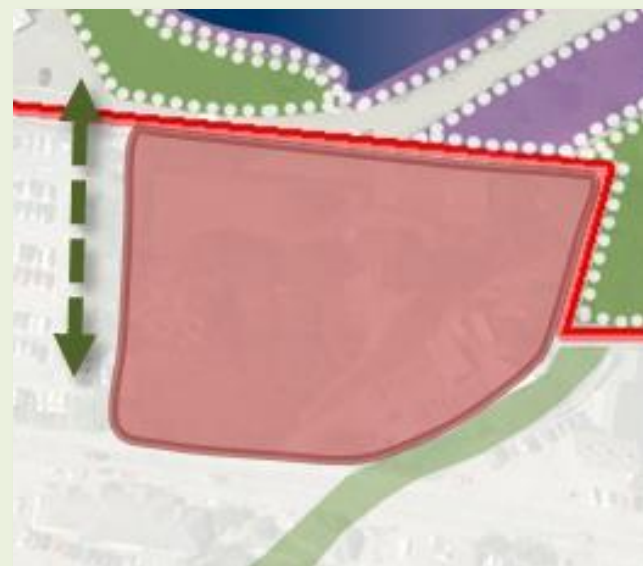
Area 2 offers the potential for the expansion of existing mixed retail and leisure facilities.

It forms the activity hub of AHR with a variety of uses including shopping, restaurants and cinema. The existing car park provides an opportunity to expand the existing business offer whilst still providing sufficient car parking on the land adjoining (Proposed Car Park). Future built development should be consistent with the existing development design and not exceed its height.

Retaining the existing areas of trees/green space that surround the site will be important for providing context and ensuring the integration of existing and future development into the wider site.



Spey Valley Leisure Arena



POTENTIAL MIXED DEVELOPMENT AREA ADJOINING THE SITE

This site adjoins the southern boundary of AHR. It provides a potential opportunity for development to integrate and complement development at AHR as well as enhancing the town centre. Connectivity through the site will be important.

3. GREEN SPACES & GREEN NETWORKS/LINKAGES

Greenspace is a key element of AHR. The network of green spaces throughout the site should be protected and enhanced making the most of the views to the surrounding areas and enhancing biodiversity. Existing mature trees are important for providing context to the built forms and long-term replacements will be required.

Areas 3a and 3b form the largest areas of greenspace on the site. They are important places for recreation and provide valuable open space for residents and visitors. They are connected by a network of green spaces through AHR.

Area 3a is a central and accessible area of open space with dispersed clusters of trees which help to integrate the existing development within the wider landscape. This area is a key feature of the townscape and character of Aviemore. It is used informally for recreation and is not suitable for development.



Area 3b currently provides a natural buffer between the development site and the A9.

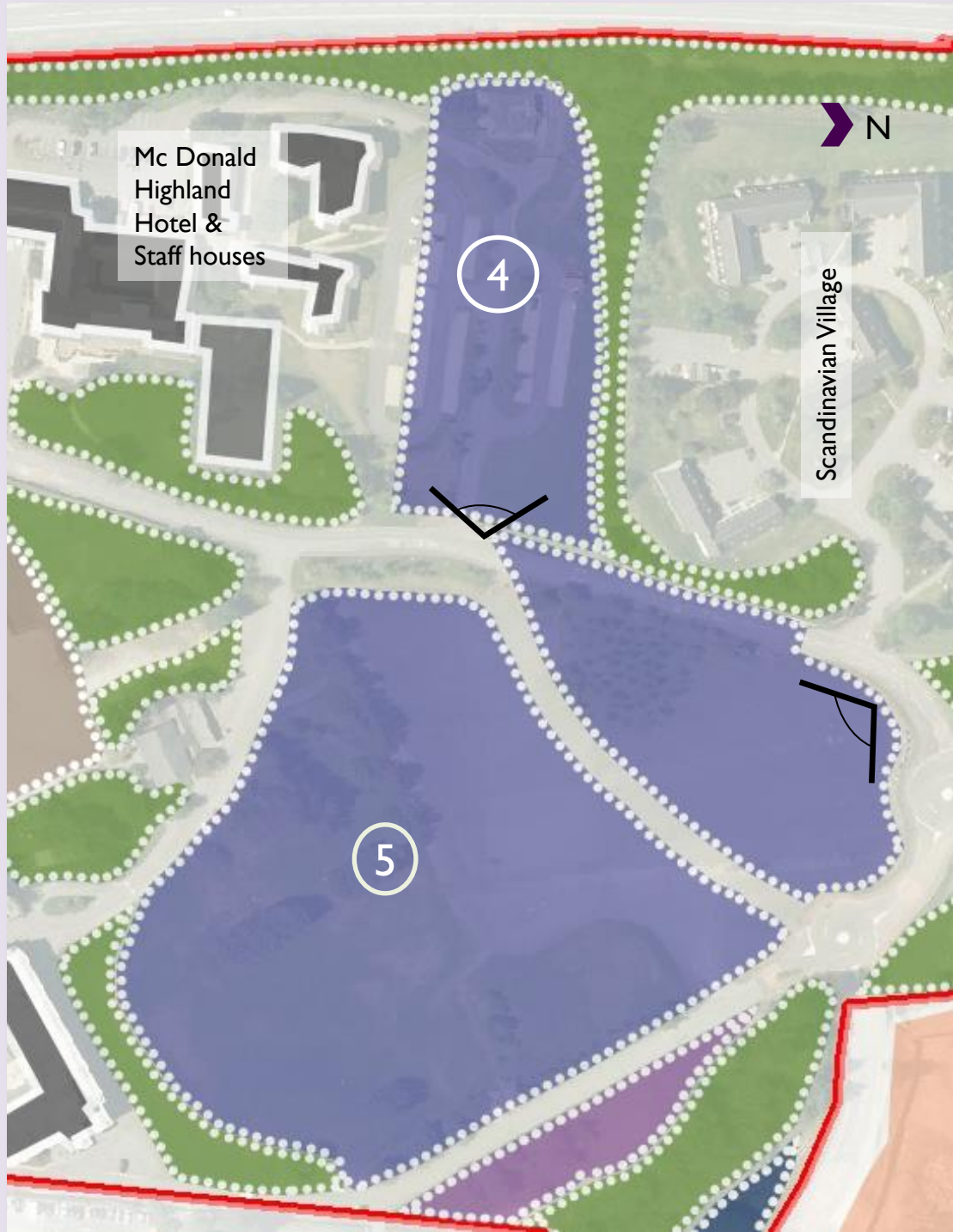
Whilst the extent of future A9 dualling into this area is currently unknown, it will be important to retain and improve planting as far as possible in this area to maintain separation from the A9 and support landscape integration.

Integration of SUDS into the existing green networks and biodiversity corridors will be expected wherever possible.

Area 3c contains a waterway which connects with the River Spey Special Area of Conservation. It is also an important corridor for biodiversity that connects outwith the site and should be protected and enhanced.



4 / 5. RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL MIXED SITES



Areas 4 and 5 have potential for mixed use development.

Area 4 is contained between the Scandinavian Village to the north and McDonald Highland Hotel and staff houses to the south, with the A9 running along the west. It has the potential for development comprising residential and commercial uses linked with Area 5 to the south.

It can accommodate development of between 2 and 3 storeys in height, in keeping with the developments to the north and south.

Area 4 sits against the backdrop of Craigellachie to the west, with the main aspect /view to the east, facing the Cairngorms. Proposals for this area should utilise this outlook and maximise solar gain to the south.

Area 5 is centrally located within AHR, neighbouring the Spey Valley Leisure Arena, Scandinavian Village, and town centre boundary. It has the potential for a mixture of residential and commercial uses.

Commercial uses should be focused to the south of the site, closer to the existing hub of the Spey Valley Leisure Arena.

The housing should be focused in the north, in closer proximity to other residential areas.

There are dispersed trees which should be retained as far as possible to help integrate the development into the wider landscape.



Entrance to the Scandinavian Village

Area 5 should utilise and protect existing areas of greenspace and is expected to establish green corridors to enhance the built form and aid landscape integration and habitat connectivity as far as possible.

Development should generally not exceed 2 storeys to ensure it is consistent with the surroundings.

Development should maximise solar gain from the south.



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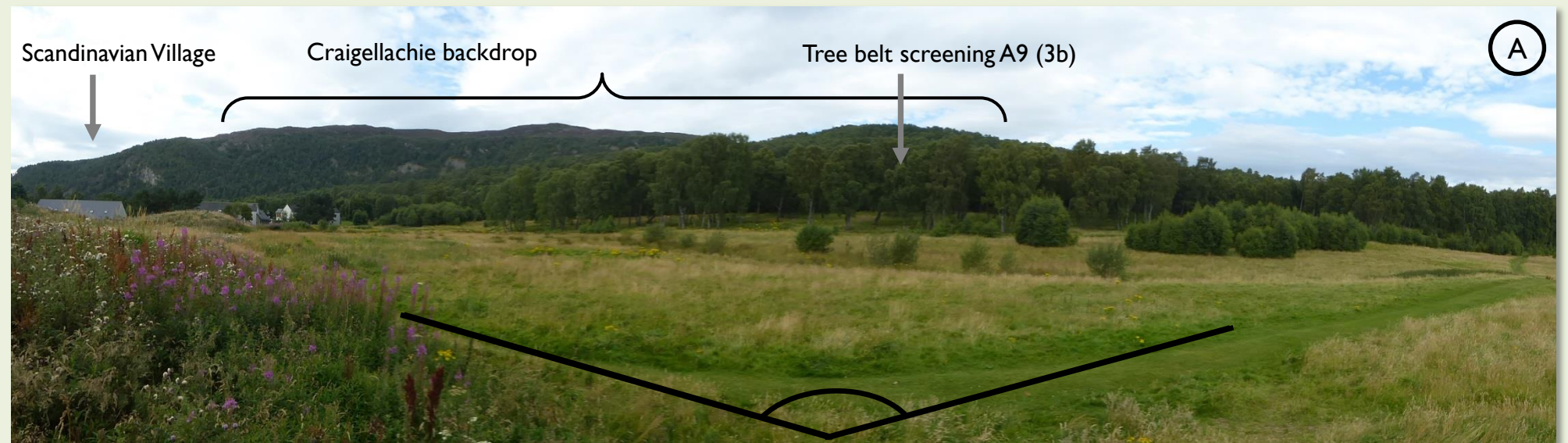
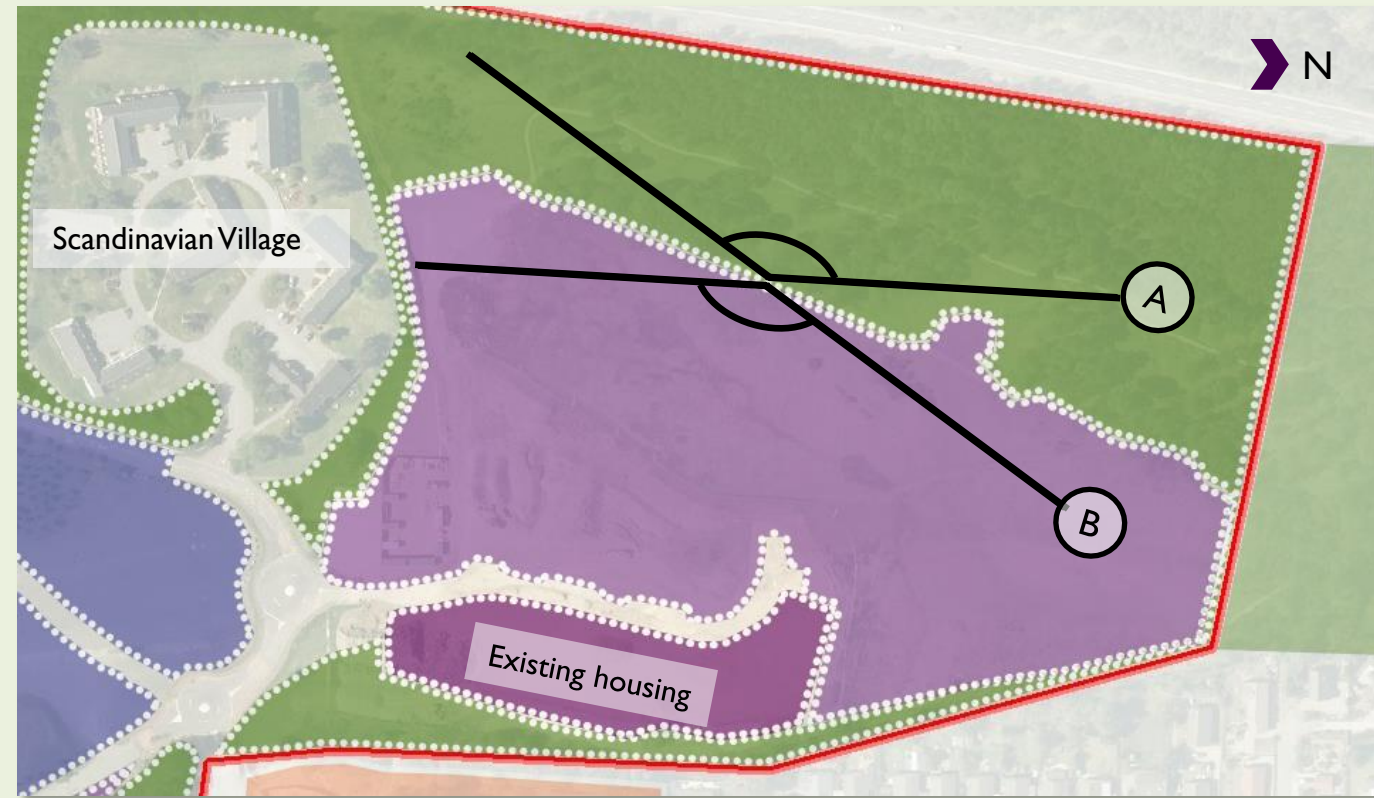
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6. RESIDENTIAL SITE WITH EXISTING PERMISSION

Area 6 has existing permission for a total of 161 residential units comprising of two planning applications for 140 and 21 units respectively. Both planning permissions have been implemented through the development of 33 affordable units have already been completed (dark purple area on the plan).

This site is located between the Scandinavian Village to the south, the A9 along the western edge and further residential housing to the north and north east. It also adjoins a site identified for retail development to the south east with road access to the south.

Area 6 has a largely open aspect to the south east which can maximise solar gain. Adjoining it to the west is a well established and high quality green space containing mature trees / dispersed woodland. This planting helps to screen views into and out of the site along the busy A9 and should be retained and enhanced to conserve biodiversity and recreation. There is also a core path running through the woodland/greenspace which enhances the connectivity of this area to the surrounding areas. Entry and exit points to Area 6 should be defined and enhanced.



DESIGN

Development of AHR must take account of all relevant Local Development Plan (LDP) policies.

All proposals for development must include a design statement demonstrating how they meet the criteria set out in **LDP Policy 3: Sustainable Design**. Key factors that the design statement should address include:

- **Minimising the effects of climate change and making sustainable use of resources.** This includes maximising solar gain (see page 9), utilising opportunities to incorporate energy saving technologies, district heating including geothermal and the incorporations of SUDS for amenity, biodiversity and flood prevention.
- **Being sympathetic to the traditional pattern and character of the surrounding area.** Aviemore has experienced extensive growth in recent decades and contains a range of building styles, however new development should seek to reflect the principles of its traditional character in modern design. The development should also contribute to the landscape character and maintain key characteristics such as open views to the surrounding hillsides.
- **Using materials and landscaping that complement the setting of the development.** As set out in this Development Brief, woodland is a key feature within the site as well as the landscape it sits within. Development should seek to retain trees and woodland where possible to support integration of development into the landscape.
- **Maintaining and maximising opportunities for responsible outdoor access.** The site contains a network of paths into and out of the site. The development should seek to ensure good permeability across the site for pedestrians and cyclists.



Many new developments in Aviemore contain vernacular style features which can be achieved using suitable modern materials. Features such as wall head dormers and pitched roof porches help to maintain a sense of traditional character whilst complementing modern design.



Examples of different materials being used for modern developments in Aviemore. A variety of materials can be used to reflect traditional character including timber, masonry, render or harl with traditional slate or modern equivalents including tiles or profile sheeting. Local materials should be used where possible.

In addition to LDP policies, development of AHR should also take into account **Creating Places: A policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland**. The policy statement sets out the importance of good design in creating places that enhance the quality of peoples lives. It sets out that successful places should be:

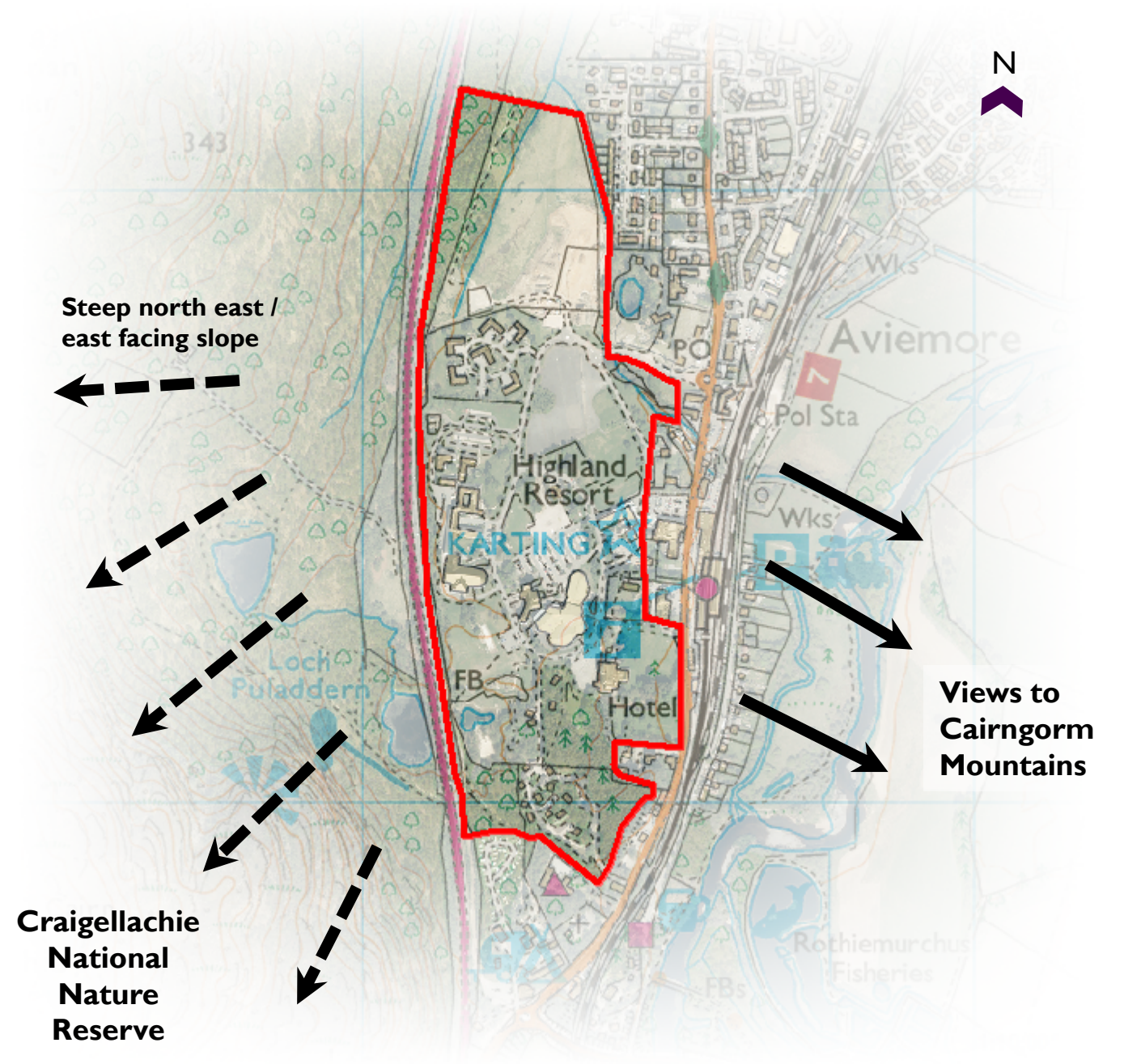
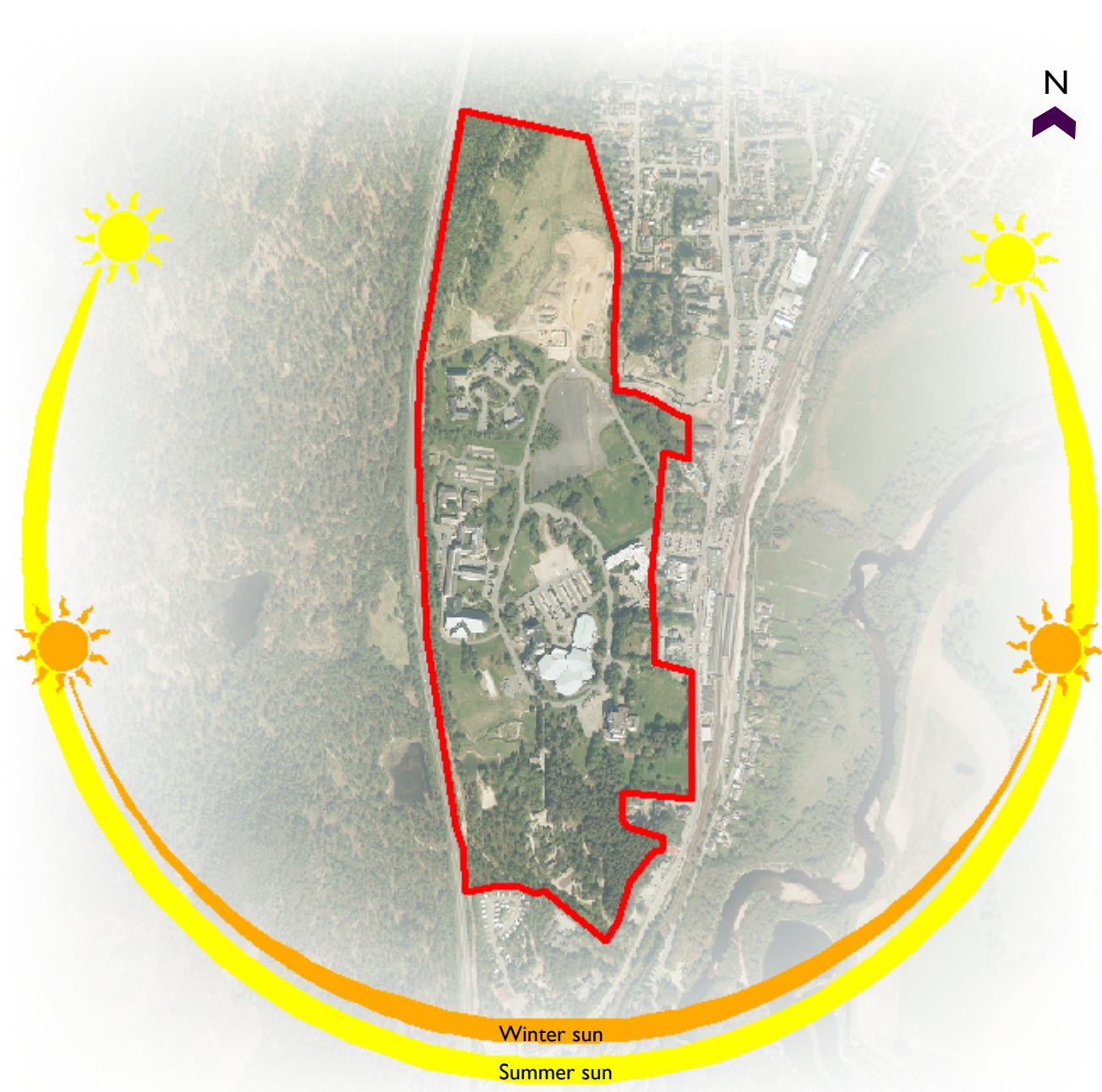
- distinctive;
- safe and pleasant;
- easy to move around;
- welcoming ;
- adaptable; and
- resource efficient.

Development of the site should seek to reflect these principles. Whilst AHR comprises a number of different parts, each part should be designed in collaboration to deliver a successful place.

Road design and layout are central to creating safe, welcoming and connected places. The site should be designed to reflect the principles set out in **Designing Streets: A policy statement for Scotland**. Well considered layouts, road surfaces and landscaping should encourage permeability and minimise cars and roads dominating the frontages of buildings and open spaces.



SUN PATHS AND KEY VIEWS



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NATURAL HERITAGE

All development proposals on the site will need to comply with **LDP Policy 4: Natural Heritage** and the associated Natural Heritage Supplementary Guidance.

Developments on the site have the potential to have a significant effect on the following European designated sites:

- Kinveachy Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) which is connected to Abernethy Forest SPA, Anagach Woods SPA, Cairngorms SPA and Craigmore Wood SPA.
- River Spey Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

As a consequence, development proposals must address the mitigation measures set out in the Natural Heritage Supplementary Guidance to address potential impacts from:

- Disturbance to capercaillie from recreation activity in Kinveachy face woodland and Kinveachy Forest SPA
- Indirect effects of disturbance to capercaillie at Kinveachy on the other capercaillie SPAs
- Water abstraction
- Disturbance to otters
- Pollution and siltation from construction sites
- Requirement for SUDS
- Pollution from waste water

As required by paragraph 16.8 of the LDP, developers must supply as part of any planning application all necessary information to allow the planning authority to carry out Appropriate Assessment in order that they can be confident that the development will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European designated sites in view of their conservation objectives, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

If the planning authority is unable to reach this conclusion, proposals will be judged not to be in accordance with the policies of the LDP.

In addition to the effects on Natura interests, the design of any part of the development must incorporate suitable mitigation for the loss of natural heritage interests to comply with LDP policy 4. There are many opportunities to do this for example:

- Enhancement of the tree line between the AHR site and the A9
- Provision of species rich grasslands that incorporate food plants for invertebrates (eg devils bit scabious)
- Retention and improvement of existing ponds for natural heritage and the provision of additional ponds, possibly as part of SUDS schemes
- Improvement of existing birch and pine woodlands by sensitive management and allowing natural regeneration
- Provision of additional roosting/resting places for protected and/or vulnerable species such as bats, otters, swifts and swallows
- The use of SUDS to provide multiple benefits for natural heritage and landscape integration such as ponds in detention basins and the use of swales.



TRANSPORT / ROADS

Improvements to the current road network within and around AHR will be required to support further development on the site. It is advised that the developer engages with The Highland Council Roads Department at an early stage in the application process.

Transport Assessment

A Transport Assessment (TA) will be required for the site due to the additional traffic likely to be generated through development. The TA should consider impacts to the public road network, particularly the main access points and other nearby junctions.

Non-motorised travel should be encouraged as well as good pedestrian connectivity between each part of AHR and its surroundings. Opportunities to link with cycle enhancements from the A9 dualling should also be maximised. Appropriate parking provision will be required in accordance with relevant Highland Council parking standards for both cars and bicycles.

Developer contributions may be required towards upgrading affected junctions, improving crossing facilities and pedestrian / active travel routes and providing bus services to serve the site and surroundings.

Road layout

The road layout of each part of the AHR should encourage permeability, adhering to the principles of Designing Streets (see page 8). Roads within the residential areas should be designed to a 20mph self-enforcing limit.

Roads within the site may be required to be brought up to adoptable standard to support the servicing of residential and commercial developments. It is proposed that there will be a main link road through the site (see main masterplan - page 3). This road will connect the two main access points to AHR and should be made up to an adoptable standard. Pedestrian access along this road will also be required.

DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

As required by **LDP Policy I: New Housing Development and Policy II: Developer Contributions**, the development site will require appropriate contributions to mitigate the impacts of the additional dwellings on existing infrastructure and services.

These are likely to include:

- Affordable housing;
- Education;
- Community facilities; and
- Roads

Policy II is supported by Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance (2015) which sets out further how development can comply with the policy.

Affordable housing

In accordance with Scottish Planning Policy it is expected that 25% of housing development on the site will be affordable. Opportunities to deliver the affordable housing in conjunction with Aviemore communities are encouraged.

Education

Contributions will likely be required to accommodate additional children requiring school places at Aviemore Primary School and Kingussie High School as a result of the development. The developer should therefore engage with CNPA and the Highland Council at an early stage in order to discuss anticipated education contributions.

Community facilities

The LDP identifies site CI in Aviemore for the provision of future community uses / facilities. There are limited community facilities within Aviemore and further development on this site will therefore result in the need for new community facilities. A contribution may be required to support the provision of new facilities on the CI site.

Roads

Appropriate contributions towards road infrastructure, public transport and active travel may be required as outlined in the previous section. The developer should engage with The Highland Council Roads Department at an early stage to discuss anticipated contributions.

This document is available to view on www.cairngorms.co.uk.

**It also available in large print and other
formats on request.**

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