



Robert Grant 31/3/10 16:01
Comment: Map to be changed to include area to north as per Reporter's recommendations – 2 additional areas to north – see map below

Development Brief – Grantown-on-Spey GS/HI
May 2010 consultation draft

Planning in the Cairngorms National Park

The Cairngorms National Park is the largest National Park in the UK, encompassing areas of Highland, Aberdeenshire, Moray and Angus. A Scottish Government consultation is taking place to extend the boundary into Perthshire.

Planning in the Cairngorms National Park is unique. It involves the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) working alongside the Local Authorities, who continue to deal with many of the planning applications within their respective areas. All planning applications submitted must comply with all the policies in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (once adopted) and any relevant Supplementary Guidance.

Any planning application should be submitted to the relevant Local Authority in the normal manner. The Local Authority checks to ensure all the necessary information is supplied and registers receipt of the application. The CNPA is informed by the Local Authority and then has 21 days to decide whether to call-in the application. Only applications which are of general significance to the aims of the Park are called-in. Thereafter the CNPA determines the application. In instances when planning applications are not called-in, the Local Authority continues to act as the planning authority.

This supplementary guidance sets out detailed advice to help you meet the requirements of the policies in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. It is recommended that it is read in conjunction with other relevant guidance, such as the Sustainable Design Guide.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This site is allocated in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan as being suitable for residential development of around 50 dwellings. It is in Grantown-on-Spey and is designated as site GS/H1.
- 1.2 The site is outlined in red in the location plan below (Figure 1).



Figure 1 – Grantown-on-Spey location plan

alisonlax 31/3/10 16:03

Comment: Red line needs to be altered on this plan to reflect new extent of site... as per earlier map

2.0 Purpose and status

- 2.1 The purpose of this development brief is to provide guidance on the main planning and design principles which all development of the site should be based upon:
- The site is known to be used by wading birds and more detailed survey work to establish its ecological importance and the potential impact of any development is required;
 - As supplementary planning guidance, this brief will be a material planning consideration in determining planning applications. It is intended to provide a clear indication of the requirements and expectations that the CNPA, as the planning authority, will take into account;
 - Developers should recognise the significant opportunity to provide high quality, well designed development with a considered approach to densities, form and layout, alongside significant areas of public green spaces;
 - Proposals should aim to achieve attractive, distinctive residential environments that contribute to, and enhance the sense of place and befits that of the communities of the Cairngorms National Park.



Photo caption?

3.0 Site description

3.1 The site has a number of features, constraints and opportunities to take account of when considering potential development (see Figure 2, Constraints and opportunities plan, p00):

- The site extends to approximately 3.25 ha (8.03 acres). It occupies a sensitive hillside location, with the land rising up to the west away from Grantown-on-Spey in a succession of more gently sloping terraces with steeper slopes inbetween;
- The lowest level to the east of the site remains fairly level from north to south, whereas from the high point of the site in the middle of the western boundary, the land slopes downwards gently to the south and more significantly to the north;
- The site vegetation consists of unimproved grassland with little tree cover of note, except for a remnant hedgerow along the field boundary to the north. At the centre of this boundary lies an isolated house with large garden enclosed by a dry-stone wall. The garden is well populated with mature conifers and broad leaved trees. To both sides of the garden lie further fields of unimproved grassland, beyond which lies a visually intrusive caravan site;
- Beyond the eastern boundary lies a large house in extensive wooded grounds. To the south lie a series of modern housing estates of varying age and style. There is little screening vegetation of this housing, with only a small group of mature trees sited at the end of Beachen Court. The boundary foreground is dominated by intrusive, mainly dark stained garden fencing;
- Beyond the western boundary, the land continues to rise slightly, leading towards core path LBS5 which runs along the disused railway line. The skyline is dominated by mixed, mainly coniferous planting. The wider landscape is

characterised by well designed commercial forestry on the hillsides, with drifts of birch, larch and spruce providing a pleasant prospect.



View from west to east across the site

4.0 Site constraints and opportunities

4.1 The site highlights a number of development constraints but also potential opportunities. These are further illustrated on Figure 2, Constraints and opportunities plan, p00.

4.2.1 Physical conditions

- There are excellent panoramic views from the higher parts of the site, over the adjacent housing to the mountains to the south, east over the town to hills beyond and farmland and hills to the north. There are no long views to the west due to the woodland. However there are good long views from lower down the site to the north and over the houses to the mountains in the south. Low views are restricted on all boundaries apart from to the north, where, with the exception of the boundary with the isolated house, there are good short views into the fields beyond, though these are marred by the visually prominent caravan site in the middle distance;
- The topography of the site and location in relation to the town and its surroundings is the most significant factor affecting development. It offers considerable opportunities to maximise the benefits afforded by the views looking outwards, but the visual prominence of the site from external viewpoints is a major constraint, which will require very careful and sensitive design to overcome, most particularly on the mid to higher levels of the site. The lower eastern part of the site does not suffer from these constraints, being somewhat enclosed on its eastern and southern boundaries;
- The whole site benefits from good solar orientation, except for shading in the afternoon and evening on the western boundary. Maximum use of solar gain should be employed in building design and site layout to assist in achieving low energy housing. The site is exposed to north-easterly winds, although sheltered from the prevailing south-westerly winds by woodland;

- The site has a number of clearly established 'desire line' paths crossing it, including to core path LBS5. These paths should be retained in the development, with appropriate external links to maximise the opportunity to promote and enhance recreational experience from within the site and adjacent development.

4.2.2 Development opportunities

- The development of the site presents an excellent opportunity for large and small scale developers to work together. This would give the opportunity for a variety of house types and styles. In addition, the provision of serviced plots is encouraged;
- The provision of a Priority Purchase Scheme (giving local people opportunities to purchase the plots/properties for a period of time, before they are placed on the open market) for local people should be given careful consideration; this has met with some considerable success elsewhere in the Park.

4.2.3 Natural heritage

- Developers should make themselves aware of any natural heritage designations, conservation and/or other interests within the site. Appropriate surveys and mitigation will be required (see Biodiversity, p00);
- As noted above, existing evidence points to the presence of wading birds and appropriate survey work should be undertaken early in the process and inform the development layout. Surveys should form an integral part of any planning application;
- There are no statutory natural heritage designations (SSSI) on this site.



Photo caption?

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Comment: Need to change this map also so red line includes the two additional parcels of land

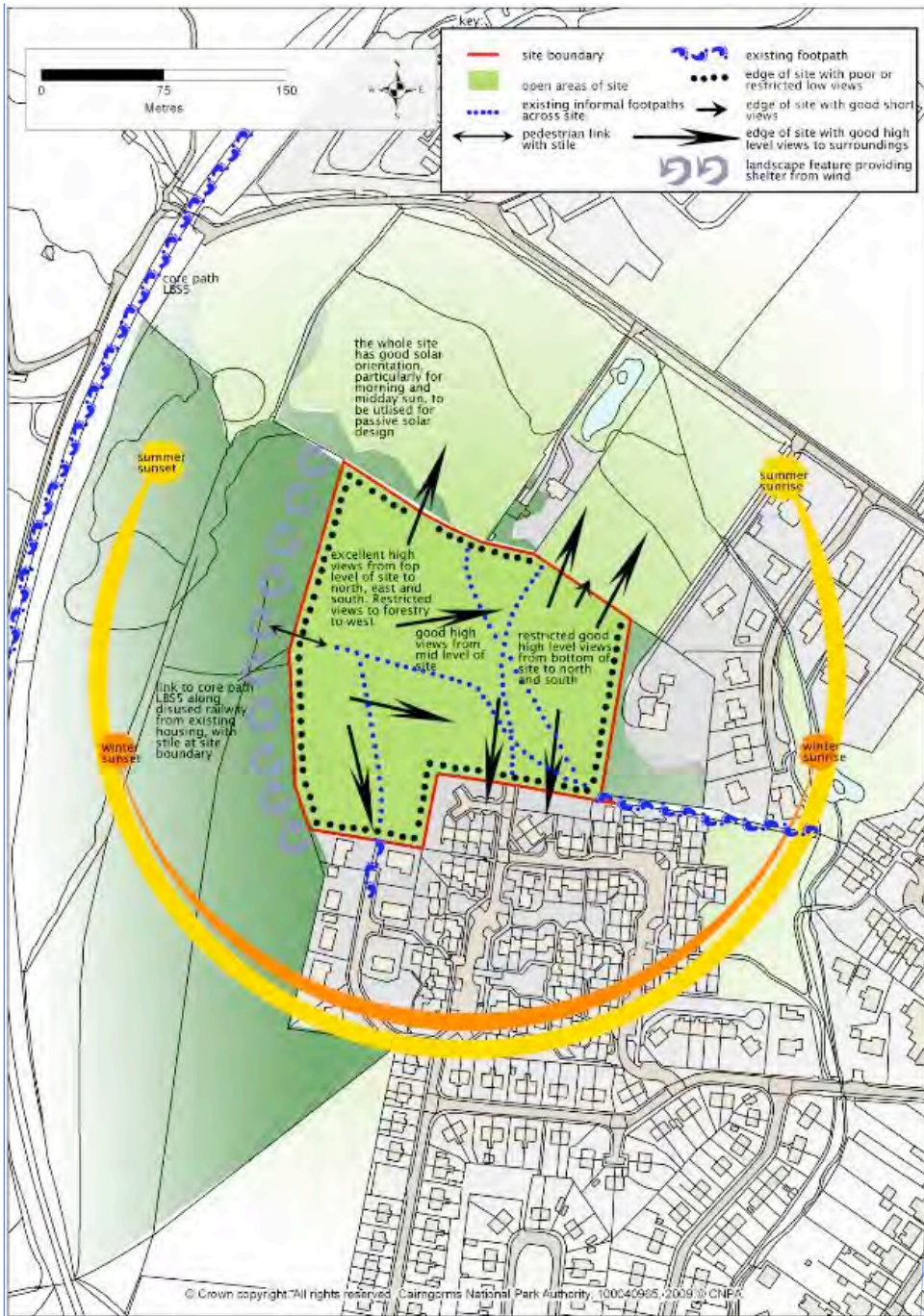


Figure 2 Constraints and opportunities plan

5.0 Development requirements

5.1 Requirements for development of the site are set out in this section and partially illustrated on the Requirements plan. These requirements emerge from the planning policy framework and the specific constraints and opportunities afforded by the site itself.

5.1.1 Developer contributions

- Developers should make themselves aware of likely development contributions required within each community, where the need arises to increase or improve public services, facilities or infrastructure arising from the development. The final level of contribution sought should be based on an assessment of the impacts on the community undertaken jointly with the developer and planning authority.

5.1.2 Affordable Housing

- A proportion of the total number of units on the site should be provided as affordable housing. The proportion sought will be to a target of between 25 per cent and 40 per cent depending on the type of affordable housing required and the economic viability of the development. Discussions should take place in the first instance with the CNPA and Highland Council's Housing and Property Services to determine the current requirements for this site.

5.1.3 Phasing

- A scheme of phasing shall require to be agreed between the CNPA and the developer, reflecting the capacity of the site, the Local Plan housing land supply requirement and market, community and other arising circumstances.

5.1.4 Density and Diversity

- A variety of house sizes and the ability of houses to adapt to the changing needs of inhabitants over time can provide long term housing solutions, contributing to stable communities;
- A number of different types of buildings should be present, with a mixture of scales of housing including detached, semi-detached and terraced units, of various densities and unit sizes;
- Due to the topography, ground conditions and varying housing typologies, density will vary over the site with high density in the south-east, adjacent to the existing housing and medium density to the north-east, all on the lower levels of the site;
- Only low density housing should be located towards the higher western side of the site, with density at its lowest nearest the western boundary. Housing density and location is illustrated in the Requirements plan (Figure 3, p00).

5.1.5 Community Identity

- A complex set of human need forms community identity. Part of this is a sense of place and belonging. Good design of the places we inhabit contributes strongly towards this;
- A high standard of development is expected - the existing character of Grantown-on-Spey is to be enhanced by the new development. Proposals should aim to achieve attractive, distinctive residential environments contributing to, and enhancing sense of place;
- Prominent views, from outside the boundaries of the development and within, should be identified and used to delineate public and private space.

5.1.5 Exemplary Development

- New development should be good quality design which befits that expected of a National Park; it should not be of a bland 'suburban' type with no reference to locality. Innovative, modern design is encouraged;
- Developers should recognise the significant opportunity to provide high quality, well designed development with a considered approach to densities, form and layout, alongside significant areas of public green spaces.

5.1.6 Informed Design

- A site analysis should be undertaken, including existing microclimatic conditions, relationship to neighbouring buildings and countryside, use patterns of the site and transport analysis including opportunities to enhance pedestrian and non-vehicular experience. An explanation of the proposed developments relationship to the existing village should be included in a design statement;
- Variety and richness of size and shape of houses and material use should be utilised, ensuring that building shapes reflect the principles and proportions of traditional housing in the area. Alternating building heights are acceptable from 1 to 2.5 storey;
- For buildings higher on the hillside, bright white colouring should be avoided, as should excessive reflective surfaces. Any coloured render should echo the soft natural tones of the surrounding countryside. Built form should be carefully integrated with the terraced topography of the site, working together with and in sympathy with the slopes to preserve the excellent views over the rooflines of houses below, but avoiding unacceptable engineering operations such as platform creation;



- New development should not simply copy older buildings in the area. Existing form, building lines and massing should be considered and influence the proposed design;
- Building clusters should be formed, focused on external amenity space. Amenity space should be designed to be useable;

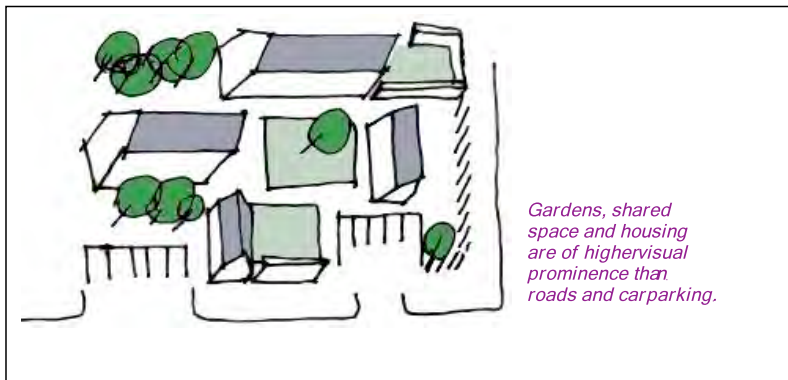


Figure 00 Example of potential streetscape layout

- Natural materials such as stone, lime render and timber, with slate or metal roofing finishes are preferred, but are not exclusive and should not preclude innovative design. Material choices should be clearly explained in a design statement;
- Boundaries of the proposed development are particularly important; any of which form the edge of a village are important to the identity of the settlement and should be treated as key design elements. Good boundary treatments consisting predominately of stone walling, with hedge planting or limited timber fencing should be used on the site edges and for internal boundaries;
- The boundaries along the north and west of the site will form a new settlement edge and must be of high quality design. Views out of the gardens and housing to the surrounding landscape should be exploited, with screen planting provided around the site boundaries, framing views and reducing the visual impact of the development. The ruined stone wall on the northern boundary should be reinstated.

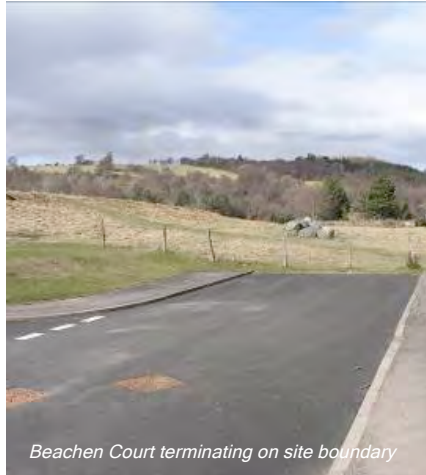


5.1.7 Access and Links

- The rural nature of many of the settlements within the Cairngorms National Park should be recognised. The levels of public transport to access shops and services often means that using a car is necessary;
- Vehicular access to the site is expected to be made from Beachen Court, where an existing access road currently terminates on the southern boundary of the site. It is understood that an area of land immediately adjacent to this is under the ownership of Highland Council. Developers should make themselves aware of options for access at an early stage, options for alternative access from Seafield Avenue. A Transportation Assessment is likely to be required;
- Pedestrian and cycle access should be provided throughout the site as part of a movement network, with external links to Beachen Court and Revoen Drive on the southern boundary, the footpath leading to the town centre in the south-eastern corner of the site and to core path LBS5 on the western boundary. In addition, the informal pathways across the site, including through the northern boundary, should be integrated into green corridors to be introduced across the site;
 - Well considered layouts and landscaping should avoid cars and roads dominating the frontages of buildings, or the layouts of development generally. They should be screened or at the back of building clusters;
- The new development should be accessible, well connected and linked to the existing village. The footpath and cycle network should be part of the planting infrastructure with through routes and connections to the wider road and path network encouraged, including core paths and 'safer routes to schools.'

5.1.8 Sustainable build and energy requirements

- The design of all development should seek to minimise the reduce requirements for energy, demonstrate sustainable use of resources and use non-toxic, low-embodied energy materials. Please see the Cairngorms National Park Sustainable Design Guide (www.cairngorms.co.uk) for further information;
- Appropriate on-site renewable technologies should be used to achieve zero and low carbon developments.



5.1.9 Open space and landscaping

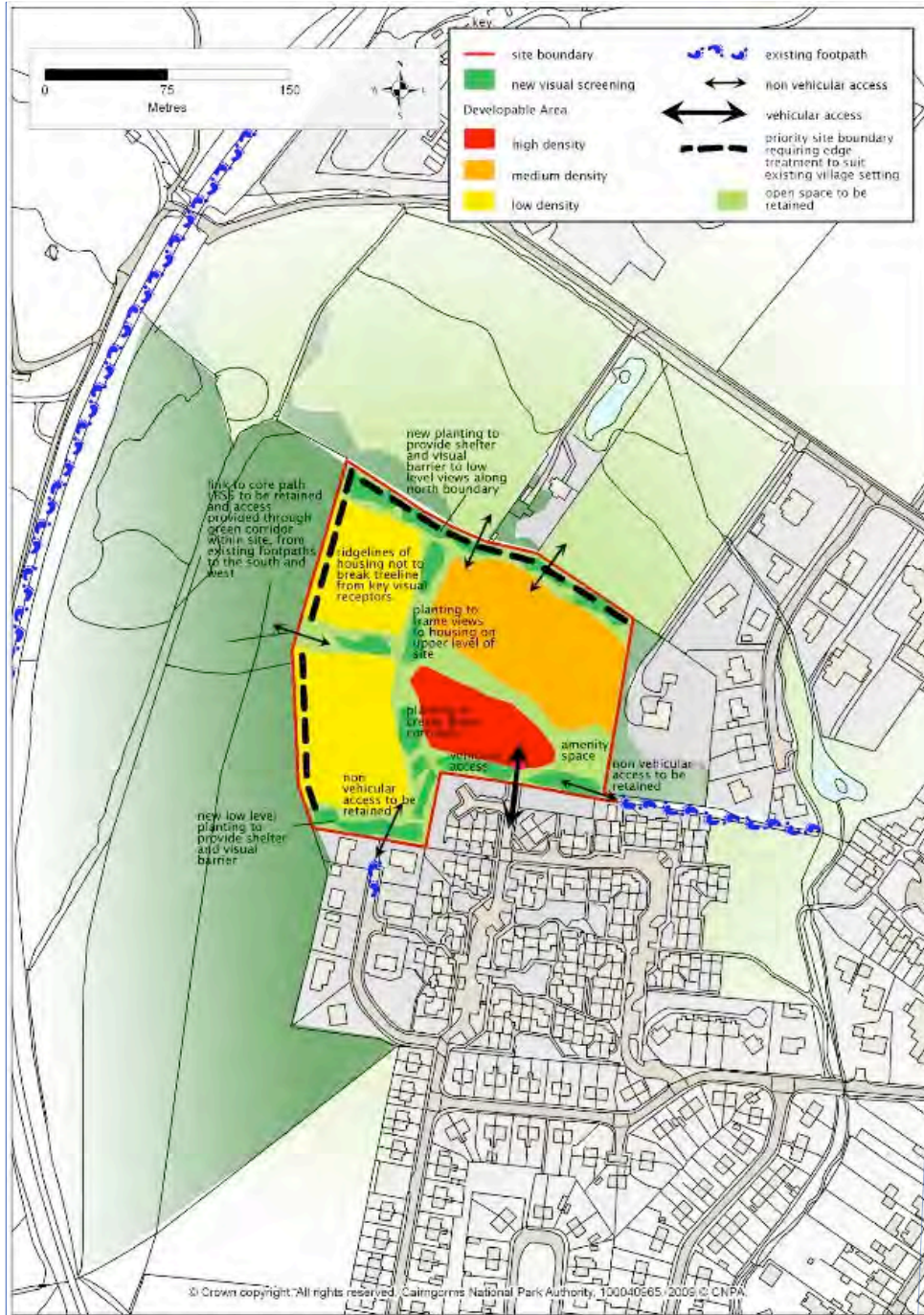
- The site must include a comprehensive series of opens spaces all linked by the footpath and cycle network to peripheral green space and areas outwith the site boundary;
- Developers should refer to the Cairngorms National Park Supplementary Planning Guidance on Open Space (www.cairngorms.co.uk) for the specific requirements for open space provision. Open spaces should provide for a variety of activities including:
 - equipped play areas
 - ball games and other informal play space
 - structural tree planning
 - supporting shrub and herbaceous planting
 - high quality social spaces, such as areas of public art, allotment space or other public place;
- The site should allow for peripheral planting to screen and frame views into and out of the site as well as a comprehensive tree structure across the whole area including

street and garden trees. These should be integrated into the structure of trees in the open spaces;

- The peripheral planting areas should be a minimum of 15m wide and where shelter is required from prevailing winds they should be planted with a high proportion of trees supported with shrub planting. Internal areas should be an appropriate width to allow them to be sustainable and robust. In general a minimum of 10m around open spaces and 5m in others should be suitable. Planting should be largely native species;
- Within the housing area, there should be small copses of trees to break up the impact of the buildings in much the same way as the main urban area of Grantown-on-Spey. These should be carefully sited to preserve but frame views. Species should be as below;
- Further natural green space should be retained in particular, designed to conserve and enhance existing biodiversity;

5.1.10 Biodiversity

- Tree species suitable for the Cairngorms National Park include: birch (silver and downy), Scots pine, aspen, alder (*glutinosa*), rowan, and bird cherry. Shrub species include; juniper, blaeberry, heather, broom gorse, hazel, holly, wild honeysuckle and willow (goat and grey). Each species should be planted according to its normal ground conditions;
- A survey of the biodiversity on site will be required (please refer to the Cairngorms National Park Supplementary Planning Guidance on Natural Heritage www.cairngorms.co.uk). This must also include the ecological role of the site within the area such as foraging area and route ways as well as other habitat networks;
- The development must allow for the enhancement of biodiversity in its layout and in particular the open space and footpath/cycle network. The design of individual dwellings must also include bird and bat nesting boxes and spaces.



alisonlax 31/3/10 16:05
Comment: This map also needs amended to reflect map changes – suggest low density (yellow) is carried through on both new areas but is shown mainly as open space to be retained (green) Priority planting etc too.

Figure 3 Requirements plan (for indicative purposes)

5.1.1.1 Services and drainage

- The developer should satisfy themselves that sufficient capacity exists in all services required to support development on the site;
- Permeable surfaces are to be used throughout the site to reduce the impact of rainwater runoff. Additional rainwater runoff mitigation measures such as green roofing or rainwater harvesting are encouraged;
- A Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme must be provided for the site and should be integrated as part of the structural landscape framework of the development, designed to promote habitat enhancement;

6.0 Submitting a planning application

- 6.1 In preparing a proposal for the site, the developer is advised to hold pre-application discussions with the planning authority. Compliance with this brief should not be interpreted as ensuring automatic approval of a proposal. Any application will be judged on its merits.
- 6.2 Planning applications must be submitted in the first instance to The Highland Council. It is likely that the CNPA will call-in the application to deal with once notified of its registration.

6.3 Public consultation

During the preparation of development proposals for the site and prior to submission of a planning application, public consultation should be undertaken with the local community, recognising the requirements of the Planning Etc (Scotland) Act 2006. The issues raised and responses should be documented and incorporated with the planning application.

6.4 Surveys to support planning applications

In order to inform appropriate development of the site, the following surveys should be submitted:

- Stage I ground conditions survey
- Drainage assessment
- Ecological and biodiversity survey
- Transportation assessment

7.0 Policy context

7.1 A series of national, strategic and local policies and guidance are in place, these provide the core documents against which any planning application will be assessed. These include:

7.1.1 National Planning Guidance

- The consolidated Scottish Planning Policy 2010 and its thematic sections;
- Best practice is set out in Planning Advice Notes. PAN44, PAN 60, PAN 61, PAN 65, PAN 67, PAN 68, PAN69, PAN 72, PAN74, PAN 75, PAN 76, PAN 77, PAN 79, PAN 81 and PAN 84;
- ‘Designing Places, A Policy Statement for Scotland’.
- ‘Designing Streets: A Policy Statement for Scotland’

7.1.2 The Cairngorms National Park Plan

- The Cairngorms National Park Plan provides an overarching context for development planning and management within the National Park and is a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets out the four aims for the National Park and the CNPA has a statutory function to achieve these in a collective and co-ordinated way:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- To promote sustainable use of natural resources of the area;
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
- To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities

- The Cairngorms National Park Plan sets out a vision, a number of guiding principles and strategic objectives to secure delivery of its aims. These provide a framework for delivery in the Local Plan.

7.1.3 The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan

- The site is identified for housing development within the Settlement Proposals section of the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. Development proposals must comply with the requirements stated in this section and with all relevant Local Plan Policies.

7.1.14 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- In addition to this development brief, the CNPA has developed other supplementary planning guidance, which should be complied with in any development proposals.

- Sustainable Design Guide
- Carbon emissions
- Energy generation
- Developer contributions
- Natural heritage
- Open space
- Affordable housing
- Core Paths Plan
- Water Resources