



Development Brief – Newtonmore NM/HI

March 2010 Consultation Draft VI

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 for extending the boundary into Perthshire, towards the end of 2010.

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.

Contents

Page

1. Introduction	
2. Purpose and status	
3. Site description	
4. Site constraints and opportunities	
- Physical conditions	
- Services	
- Development opportunities	
- Natural heritage	
5. Development requirements	
- Developer contributions	
- Affordable Housing	
- Phasing	
- Density and Diversity	
- Community Identity	
- Exemplary Development	
- Informed Design	
- Access and Links	
- Sustainable Build / Energy Requirements	
- Open Space / Landscaping	
- Biodiversity	
- Services/Drainage	
6. Submitting a planning applications	
- Public consultation	
- Surveys to support planning applications	
7	
- National Planning Framework	
- The Cairngorms National Park Plan	
- Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan	
- Supplementary Planning Guidance	

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This site is allocated in the Cairngorms National Park Deposit Local Plan as being suitable for residential development of around 120 dwellings. It is designated as site NM/H1.
- 1.2 The site is located within the settlement of Newtonmore and is outlined in red in the location plan below (Figure 1).
- A resolution to grant planning permission on conclusion of a Section 75 agreement is in place for construction of 81 dwellings on the north-western end of the site. This is indicated by the broken red line the location plan. Consequently, this brief focuses only on the remainder of the site. Developers should hold discussions with the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) in advance of submitting a planning application to determine the number of dwellings acceptable for the site.



Figure 1 – Newtonmore NM/H1 location plan

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 development of the site should be based upon:
- This visually prominent site, along with site NM/H2, would require a substantial level of landscaping to soften and contain the development, reinforcing the new settlement boundary, while the opportunity to realise the aspirations of the local community for an A86 bypass should also be realised;

- 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.

3. 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 allocated site area extends to approximately 11.7 ha, of which 7.8 ha, (19.3 acres) remains as subject for consideration in this brief;
- The site is a mainly flat field on the flood plain of the rivers Spey and Calder, visually prominent when approaching Newtonmore from the south west. The land, currently used for grazing, falls slightly towards the south east, where a shallow dip along the site boundary appears to indicate an earlier river course. This area is prone to seasonal lying water;
- The field continues beyond the south-eastern boundary to the main railway line to Inverness, which runs along a low embankment, and a wind exposed community woodland, planted mainly with birch and pine, interspersed with whin;
- A post and wire fence and access track runs along the south-western boundary, beyond which lie fields and an unscreened caravan site. The boundary to the north-west abuts the proposed new housing development at its western end. The remainder of this boundary runs in irregular fashion around the north of the site, following the bottom of a knoll, wooded mainly with pine and occupied by houses of mixed age and architecture which overlook the site;
- The north-eastern boundary runs along Station Road, on the other side of which lies an area of open space and at the southern end, an industrial estate. A small group of stone built cottages lie adjacent to the site on its eastern corner;
- The site is very open and exposed to the prevailing south-westerly winds. There are no trees, hedges or similar vegetation present on the site to limit this exposure.



4.0 Site constraints and opportunities

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

4.2.1 Physical conditions

- Ground conditions, topography, surrounding planting and services are all significant factors. With the exception of the area around the knoll on the northern boundary, there are excellent long views in all directions from the site to the mountains to the east, north and west and lower hills to the south. Low views will be restricted by the proposed housing development and by the knoll along the northern boundary and also by the industrial estate, dwellings and community woodland to the east of the site;
- Good low views are available along much of the south-eastern and south-western boundaries, although medium range views from the south-western boundary are marred by the unscreened caravan site;
- The whole site benefits from good solar orientation, maximum use of which should be employed in building design and site layout to assist in achieving low energy housing;
- However, the site is very exposed to the prevailing south-westerly winds. Substantial shelter belt planting along this boundary will have the benefit not only of providing shelter from these winds, but also screening of the views to the caravan park and creation of a landscape edge to the urban area that is both in sympathy with the surrounding countryside and improves views on approach to Newtonmore;
- The area of lower ground to the south-east prone to seasonal standing water, presents the opportunity for creation of a wetland, developed as part of a Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme. Combined with the area of land between the site boundary and the railway line, in conjunction with the landowner,

community and the CNPA, the opportunity exists to treat the entire area as a pond and wetland that would further enhance amenity and biodiversity.

- The historic 'coffin road' should be safeguarded and utilised as the basis for a recreational circular route, any trees on the edges of the site should also be protected;
- A Flood Risk Assessment should be prepared for the site; areas of the site around the southern boundaries are identified as potential areas at risk of flooding, by the SEPA Indicative Flood Map. Housing development or SUDS should not be sited in the area of potential flood risk.

4.2.2 Services

- Overhead power lines currently run along the south-western boundary and across the middle of the site, presenting a constraint to development;

4.2.3 Development opportunities

- The development of the site presents an excellent opportunity for large and small scale developers to work together to bring forward the proposals, this would give the opportunity for a variety of house types and styles, while the provision of serviced plots is to be encouraged;
- The provision of a Priority Purchase Scheme for local people should be given careful consideration; this has met with some considerable success elsewhere in the Park area.

4.2.4 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 section)
- There are no statutory natural heritage designations (SSSI) on the site.



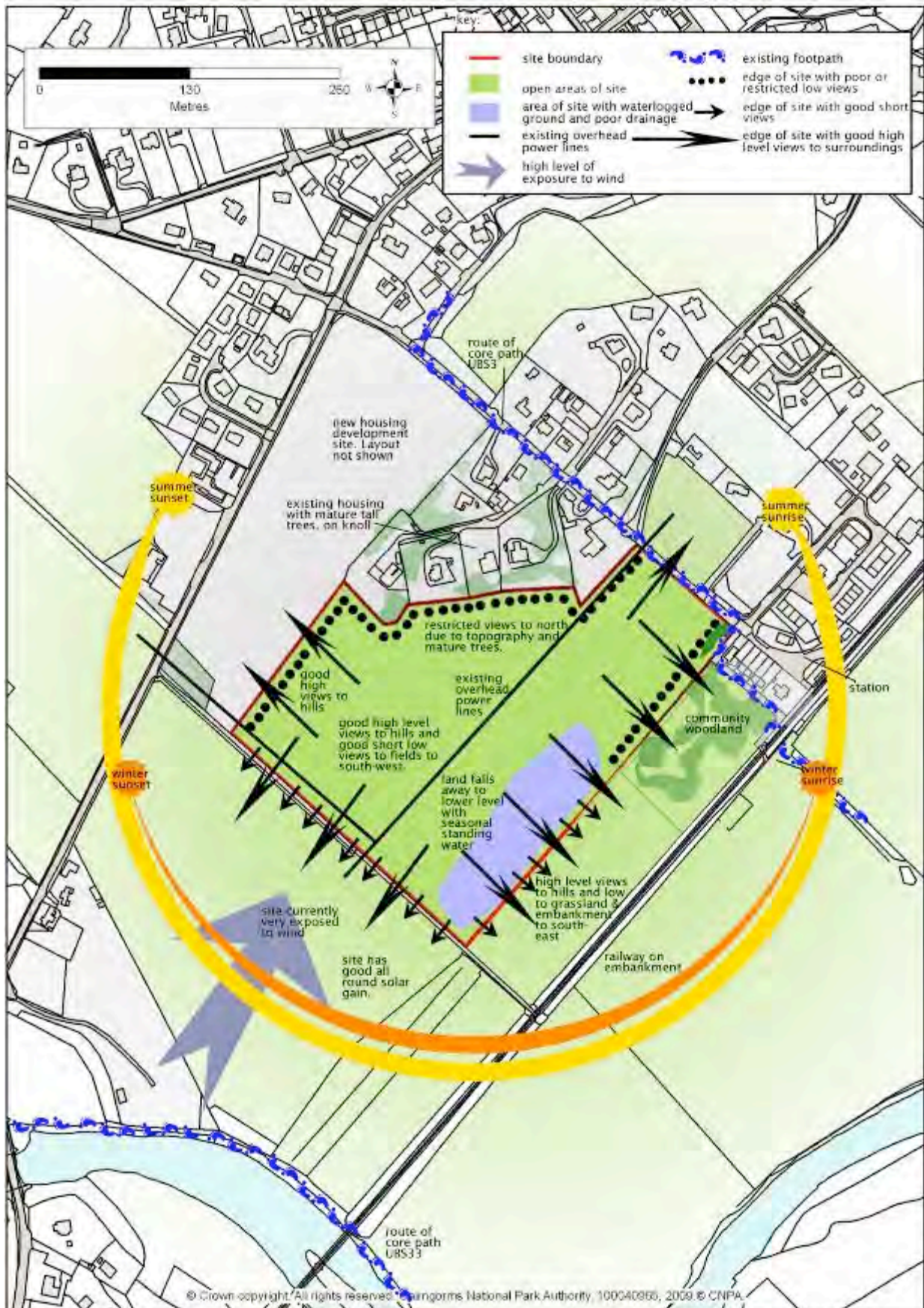


Figure 2 Constraints and opportunities plan

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 (Figure 3, p00). 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;
- The requirement for a new Link Road between the Perth Road and the B9150, allowing heavy good's vehicles to bypass the centre of the village to Station Road is widely recognised within the community. The CNPA is preparing Supplementary Guidance on Developer Contributions.



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% and 40% 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 Housing and Property Services at Highland Council 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 development in the western corner, adjacent to the new housing development. Medium density development is to be located along the northern boundary and low density to the south. Housing density and location is illustrated in the Requirements plan (Figure 3, p00).

5.1.5 Community identity

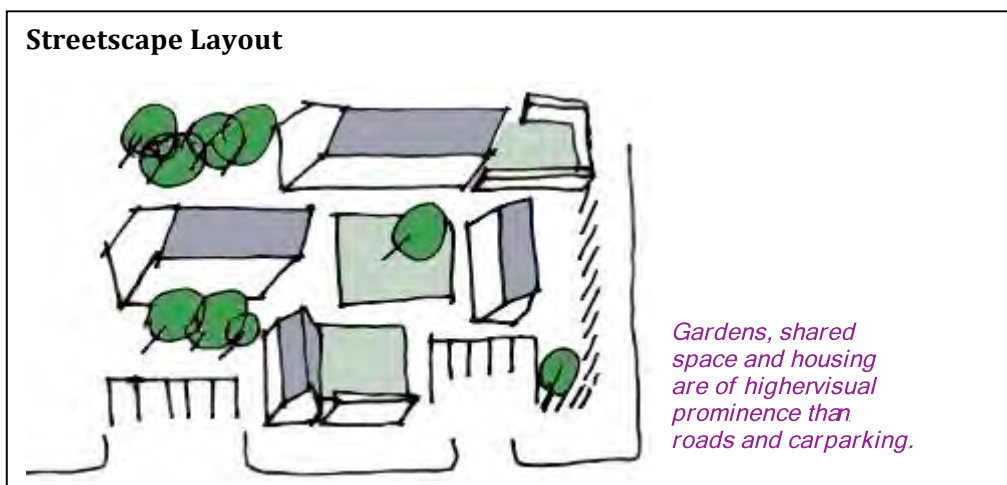
- A complex set of human need forms community identity. Part of this is a sense of place and belonging. Good design of the places we inhabit contributes strongly towards this;
- A high standard of development is expected - the existing character of Newtonmore is to be enhanced and complemented by the 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.

5.1.6 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;

5.1.7 Informed design

- A comprehensive 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 reflects the principles and proportions of traditional housing in the area. Alternating building heights are acceptable from 1 to 3.5 storey;
- 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;



- 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 boundary running from west to east around the edge of the housing will form a new village edge and should be of high quality design. Views out of the gardens and housing to the surrounding landscape are to be exploited, with screen planting provided around the site boundaries, framing views and reducing the visual impact of the development.
- The boundary along Station Road will form a new street frontage. Buildings could be sited on the street edge or with a landscaped area between them and the street.

Windows to public rooms must be provided in the street facing wall, to allow passive surveillance and to create an active street frontage. Creation of a blank façade presenting a solid unbroken wall to the street should be avoided. Houses may be in line with each other or otherwise form a cohesive frontage. It should be noted that no car access will be allowed directly onto Station Road from this frontage.



5.1.8 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 to be made from a new link road**, which should run around the southern edge of the housing development with residential streets feeding off it. This road should link to the provision being made for it in the new development on the north-western boundary and to Station Road near to the industrial estate. **This link road will be a key boundary, forming a new village edge and street frontage** and should accordingly receive appropriate design treatment as described earlier. Although houses will front onto this road, no car access will be allowed directly onto it from this frontage;
- Station Road is narrow and lacking footpaths in places. To encourage vehicles accessing the industrial estate and station to use the new link road and improve the experience for pedestrians, cyclists and residents along Station Road, a pinch point is to be provided along the site frontage, reducing the road to single track and providing a non-vehicular route alongside;
- Pedestrian and cycle access should be provided throughout the site as part of a movement network, safeguarding the 'coffin road' with external links to Station Road and Perth Road, to access the national cycle route.



- Well considered layouts and landscaping should avoid cars and roads dominating the frontages of buildings, or the layouts of development generally but 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 way 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.'

5.1.9 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 at www.cairngorms.co.uk for further information;
- Appropriate on-site renewable technologies should be used to achieve zero and low carbon developments.

5.1.10 Open space and landscaping

- The site must include a comprehensive series of opens spaces all linked by the footpath and cycleway 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, 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;
- Further natural green space should be retained in particular, designed to conserve and enhance existing biodiversity.

5.1.1.1 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 in 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/cycleway network. The design of individual dwellings should also allow for opportunities for biodiversity through the integration of bird and bat nesting boxes and spaces.

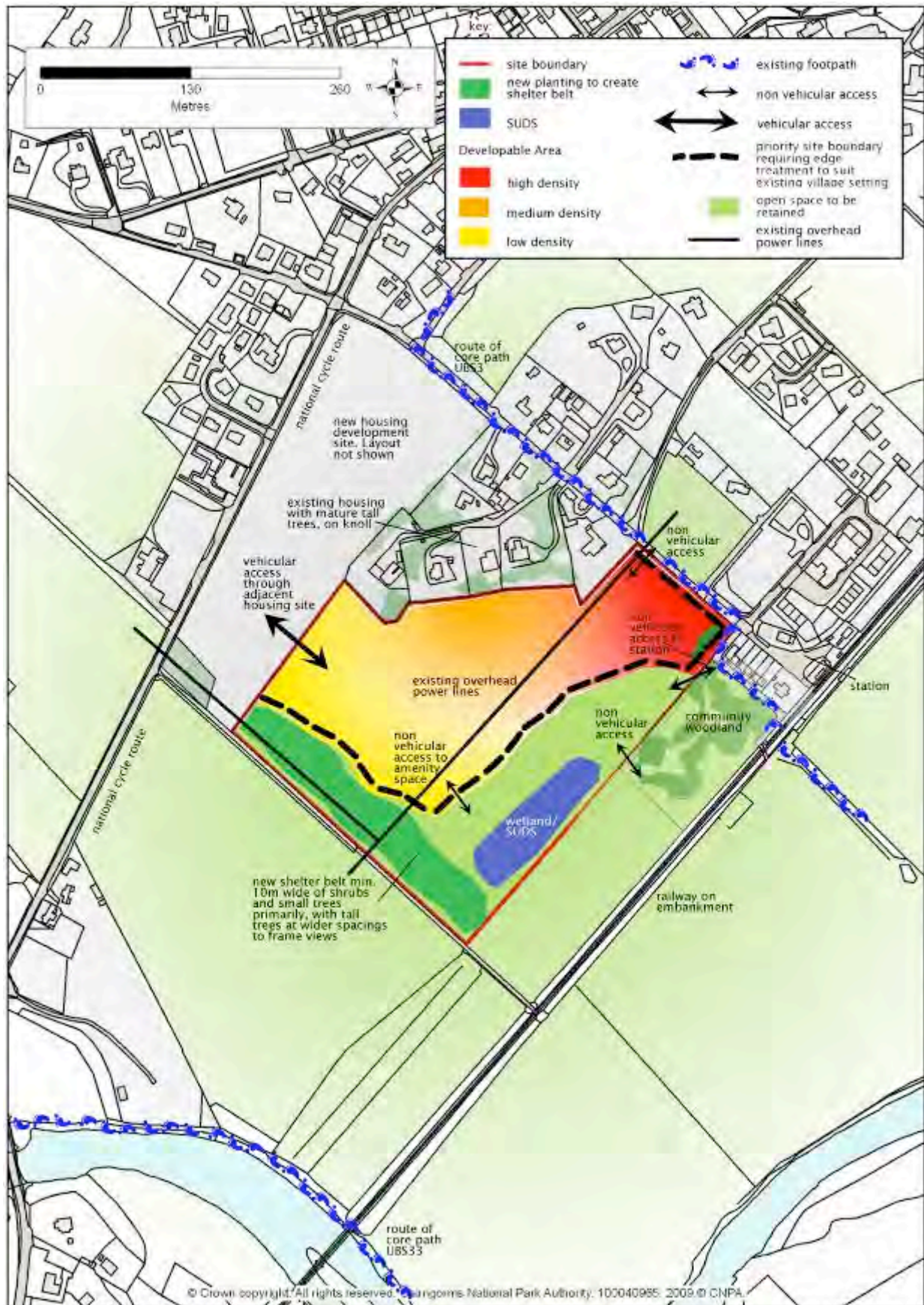


Figure 3 Requirements plan (for indicative purposes)

5.1.12 Services and drainage

- The developer must satisfy themselves that sufficient capacity exists in all services required to support development of the site. Re-routing and possible undergrounding of the overhead power line crossing the site would allow for more flexibility in the design of the development. This would need to be agreed by the developer with the service provider;
- 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;
- As described earlier, in consultation with SEPA and SNH, a Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme should be provided for the site in the form of a wetland, planted with smaller native willows and alders, providing an opportunity for 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
- Tree survey

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:

- a) To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- b) To promote sustainable use of natural resources of the area;
- c) To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
- d) 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.

7.1.4 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