



Development Brief – Newtonmore NM/H2

Consultation May 2010

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.

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I. Introduction

- I.1 This site is allocated in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan as being suitable for residential development of around 100 dwellings. It is designated as site KC/H2.
- I.2 The site is located within the settlement of Newtonmore and is outlined in red in the location plan below (Figure I).



Figure I – Newtonmore KC/H2 location plan

2. 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 NM/H1, would provide a new settlement edge and an appropriate site layout that minimises and mitigates the effects of development is required. 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 benefits 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 5.2 ha (12.85 acres);
- The site is a 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, slopes very gradually towards the south east;
- The site is bounded by the A86 road to the north-west and north-east and by Station Road further down its north-eastern boundary;
- Scattered housing of mixed age and architecture lie beyond the A86 on rising wooded ground. Houses of mixed age and architecture wrap around the eastern corner of the site, interspersed with trees and garden planting;
- Further along the south-eastern boundary, the field forming the site continues over the boundary and terminates at a roadside café and truck stop. A post and wire fence and access track runs along the south-western boundary, beyond which lie further fields;
- The site is very open and exposed to the prevailing south-westerly winds along this boundary, with no trees, hedges or similar vegetation present to limit this exposure. The only trees present on site comprise a triangular shaped group of mature pines on the north-eastern boundary.



View from north to south across the site

4. SITE CONSTRAINTS/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.

4.1.1 Physical conditions

- Ground conditions, topography, surrounding planting and services are all significant factors. There are excellent long views from the site to the mountains to the south and west. Long views to the higher ground to the north are only available from the southern part of the site and no long views are present to the east. Low views will be restricted by any development of the employment site to the south-east and are currently marred by the café and truck stop;
- The rising land with scattered development on wooded land to the north-west and north, group of trees to the north east and housing interspersed with trees and garden planting wrapping around the eastern site corner, all restrict low views from the site. However, these views are not unattractive. Medium distance low 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 the south-western boundary will have the benefit of providing shelter, screening the views to the caravan park and the 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;
- There is a small area of woodland planted in 2000 and managed by the Newtonmore Community Woodland and Development Trust, comprising native trees, adjacent to the north-west corner of the site. This will provide some shelter in this area as it matures;
- The historic 'coffin road' should be protected and utilised as the basis for a recreational circular route. Core path UBS2 lies to the north of the site, connecting with a number of other core paths, presenting the opportunity for linking the development to these paths to promote and enhance recreational opportunities;
- Any trees on the edges of the site should also be retained and protected;

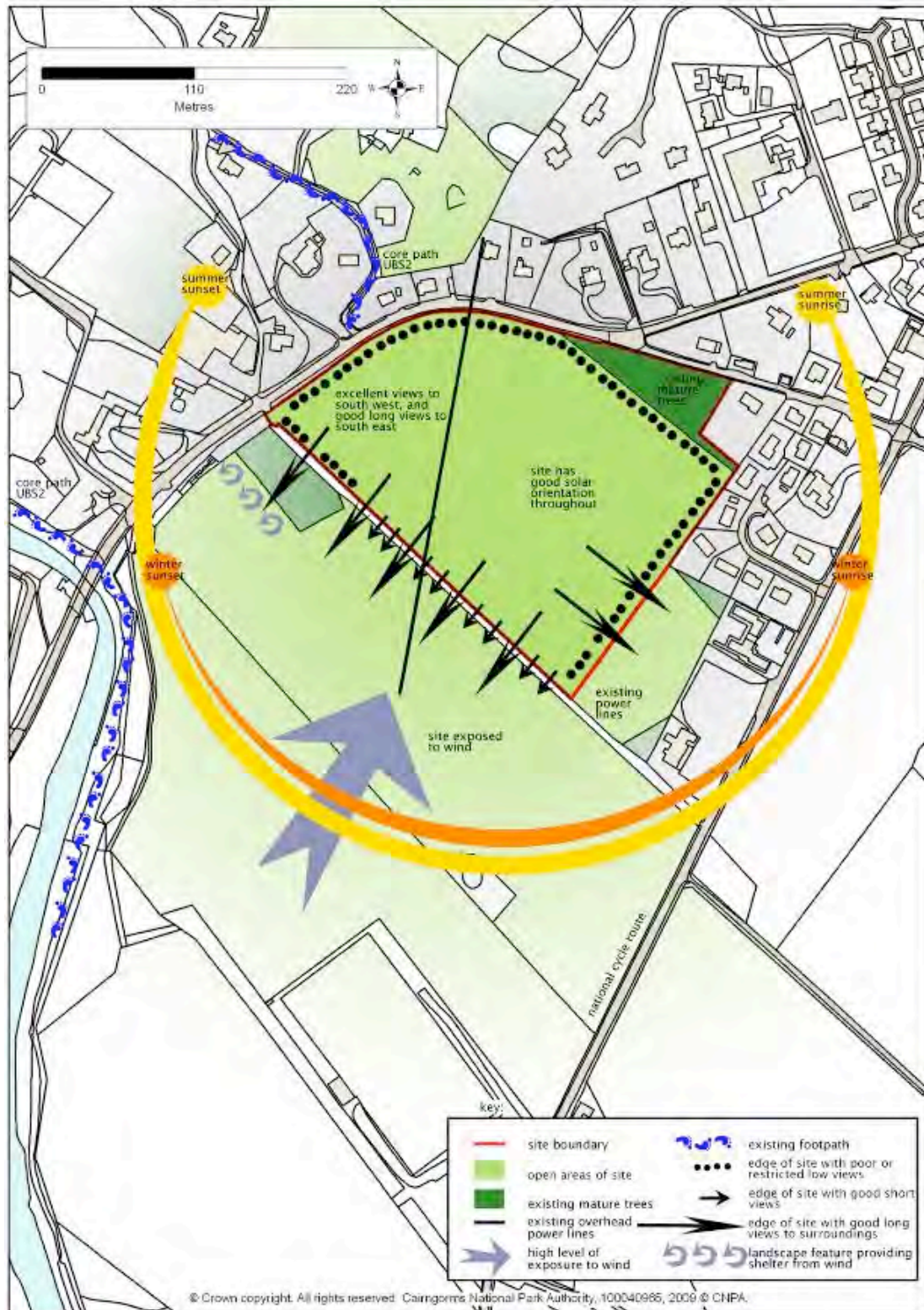


Figure 2 Constraints and opportunities plan

4.1.2 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, while the provision of serviced plots is to be 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) should be given careful consideration; this has met with some considerable success elsewhere in the Park.

4.1.3 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 section, p00)
- There are no statutory natural heritage designations (SSSI) on the site.



5. Development requirements

5.1 Requirements for development of the site are set out in this section and partially illustrated on the Requirements plan (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 Perth Road and the B9150, allowing heavy goods vehicles to bypass the centre of the village to Station Road, is widely recognised within the community. Please see the CNPA supplementary planning guidance on Developer Contributions www.cairngorms.co.uk);



Photo caption?

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 The 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 medium density development in the north, forming a new streetscape to the A86 and adjacent to the trees along Station Road;
- Lower density development will be located on the rest of the site. A new streetscape will also be formed along the link road to be constructed on the south-western site boundary. Housing density and location is illustrated in the Requirements plan (Figure 3, p00).

5.1.5 Community identity

- A complex set of human needs 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

- 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 – 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;

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 boundary along the A86 and Station Road, behind the retained trees, 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 create an active street frontage. 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 the A86 or 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, with levels of public transport and access to shops and services often meaning that access to private cars is unavoidable;
- **Vehicular access to the site will be from a new link road, which will follow the route indicated.** This road should be constructed to local distributor standard, 6m wide with 2m footways and 2m verges on each side. **The junction with the B9150 Perth Road will need to be a minimum of 50m from the corresponding link road, constructed as part of the development of site NM/H1 to the south-east. This will create a staggered junction.** The link road will be a key boundary, forming a new village edge and street frontage and should 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.
- Pedestrian and cycle access should be provided throughout the site as part of a movement network, protecting 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 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 (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 / 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
 - a recreational circular walk, part of which should follow the route of the historic 'coffin road', should be provided – as identified by the community;
- 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.

5.1.11 Biodiversity

- Tree species suitable for the Cairngorms National Park area 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.



5.1.12 Services/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.

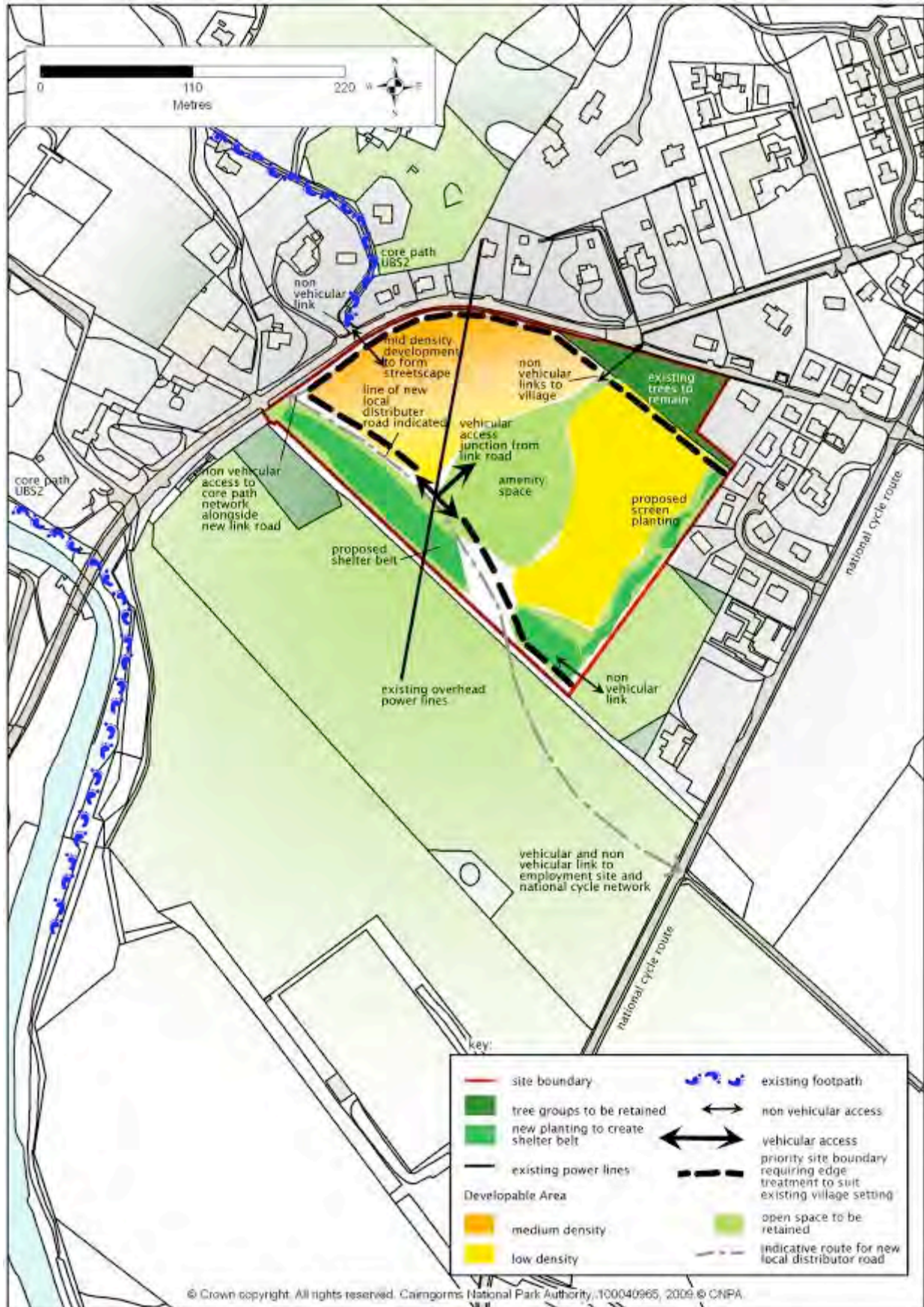


Figure 3 Requirements plan (for indicative purposes)



6. Submitting a planning application

6.1 In preparing a proposal for the site, the developer is advised to hold pre-application discussions with the CNPA. 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

7 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, 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 Deposit 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