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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR DECISION

**Title: CARR-BRIDGE HI – DRAFT DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

**Prepared by: David Berry, Planning Manager  
Dan Harris, Development Planning Officer**

### **Purpose of Report**

To ask the Planning Committee to approve for consultation a Draft Development Brief for the HI housing allocation at Carr-Bridge.

### **Summary**

The Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) identifies a number of sites for future housing development, including site HI at Carr-Bridge. This site is allocated for up to 72 houses. However, the site has a complex planning history and two planning applications for housing development on the site were refused by the Planning Committee in March 2015. This leaves a level of uncertainty over the future development of this housing allocation.

It is therefore proposed to produce a Development Brief to provide more clarity on the key issues that any future development proposals on this site should address. This should help to give more certainty for both local residents and the site developer.

### **Recommendation**

**That the Planning Committee approve the publication of the Carr-Bridge HI Draft Development Brief for a period of public consultation.**

### **Background**

1. The Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) identifies a number of sites for future housing development, including site HI at Carr-Bridge.
2. The HI site is located off Carr Road on the eastern edge of Carr-Bridge and is allocated for a total of up to 72 houses. It comprises two distinct areas. The northern section of the site is a largely flat open field, whilst the southern and extreme eastern parts of the site are located within woodland. An extract from the LDP for Carr-Bridge and a site location plan are attached as Appendices 1 and 2.

3. Members of the Planning Committee will be aware that the site has a complex planning history and was subject to a significant level of local opposition during the production of the LDP. In particular, Members will recall that the LDP Examination Reporter expressed concern over development within the woodland area and recommended that the allocation be restricted to only the non-woodland northern part of the site. Accordingly, the Reporter also recommended that the allocation capacity be reduced to 36 houses.
4. Following receipt of the Examination Report, CNPA agreed to amend the allocation in line with the Reporter's recommendation and notified the Scottish Ministers of its intention to adopt the LDP with this modification being included. However, the Scottish Ministers subsequently directed CNPA to reinstate the woodland part of the Carr-Bridge HI allocation and to increase the site capacity back to a total of 72 houses.
5. Two planning applications for housing development on the HI site have subsequently been refused by CNPA in March 2015. This leaves a degree of uncertainty over the future development of the site.
6. Because of this uncertainty, the LDP Action Programme includes a commitment to prepare a Development Brief for the HI site in order to provide more clarity on the key issues that any future development proposals should address.

### **Informal Public Consultation**

7. To inform the preparation of the Development Brief an informal questionnaire survey was undertaken in March 2016 alongside the 'Carr-Bridge Conversation' that was held to develop the new Carr-Bridge community action plan. This sought public views on the level of development that is likely to be acceptable and the issues that should be addressed during the development of the site. Questionnaires were distributed within Carr-Bridge and a copy of the questionnaire was also made available on CNPA's website for members of the public to complete electronically. A copy of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix 3.
8. A total of 32 questionnaires were returned, and a summary of the responses is provided below:
9. Question 1: Would you support development in any part of the woodland on the site?

Yes:	3 (9%)
No:	28 (88%)
Don't know / no answer:	1 (3%)

The vast majority of respondents stated that they would not support development within the woodland area. They considered the woodland to be of significant ecological and recreational value. A small number of respondents indicated that they would support some development in the woodland, primarily to meet local housing need. However, most of these indicated some support for woodland protection through the retention of a substantial woodland area.

10. Question 2: How many houses do you think should be developed on the HI site over the next 10 years?

72 (full allocation):	1 (3%)
36 (LDP Reporter's recommendation):	6 (19%)
Other:	21 (66%)
Don't know / no answer:	4 (12%)

There was very limited support for developing the full allocation of 72 houses. However, a significant minority of respondents expressed support for the development of 36 houses in line with the LDP Examination Reporter's recommendation. Of those respondents who answered 'other', 9 (28% of all respondents) said there should be no development at all, 1 suggested there should be up to 36 houses, and 5 suggested various levels of development below 36 houses. The remaining respondents provided no specific indication of the number of houses they felt would be appropriate.

11. Question 3: Please tick any/all of the factors below that you think should be covered within the Development Brief:

Access and road safety issues on Carr Road	29 (90%)
Provision of a safe pedestrian route to school	30 (94%)
Layout of development	23 (72%)
Range and type of housing	30 (94%)
Affordable housing provision	27 (84%)
Phasing of development and build rates	24 (75%)
Public realm/open space	23 (72%)

There was general support for most of the factors suggested within the questionnaire. The three most commonly ticked issues were: the range and type of housing; the provision of a safe pedestrian route to school; and access and safety issues on Carr Road. Conversely, the three issues that appeared to be least important to respondents were: phasing of development; layout of development; and public realm/open space.

12. Question 4: Please indicate any other factors that you think the Development Brief should include

Some respondents used this question to express further objection to any development on the HI site. A significant number of respondents indicated that any housing should be designed to meet local need, and others felt that restrictions should be placed on use as second / holiday homes. Other factors suggested for inclusion in the development brief included: use of sustainable building materials; nature conservation issues and opportunities to enhance Carr Wood; drainage and water service issues; provision of play areas and general amenity open space; and a desire to limit the duration of construction to minimise disruption.

## Responses to Comments and Proposed Development Brief

13. The questionnaire responses have confirmed that there remains a level of local opposition to any form of development on the HI site. These comments are acknowledged. However, they need to be balanced against the potential benefits that development is likely to deliver in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the settlement. Carr-Bridge is a thriving community, but the primary school roll (currently at c.60-65% capacity) had been projected to remain stable over the next 10-15 years when it was assumed that the earlier planning consents for 117 houses would be built. Although we don't have a projection of what would happen if there is no new housing in Carr-Bridge, it is very likely that the school roll would fall year-on-year. New housing in Carr-Bridge will not significantly increase its population, but it would maintain the supply of local customers for services and businesses as well as the school.
14. It is also important to note that the HI site is specifically allocated for housing development in the LDP. Whilst a Development Brief would provide an opportunity to influence how the site could be taken forward in a way that best benefits Carr-Bridge, it is not an opportunity to reconsider whether the site is appropriate for development in principle.
15. Responses have also reiterated concerns over the environmental impact of development on the HI site. In particular, there remains significant opposition to housing development within the woodland part of the site. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that the questionnaire has revealed some support for a more limited amount of development (i.e. at a smaller scale than the 72 houses allocated in the LDP).
16. The questionnaire responses have not provided any overall consensus on the amount of housing that would be appropriate for the HI site. The LDP Examination considered that the non-woodland area would have capacity for around 36 houses. This may be appropriate, and there was some support for this scale of development within the survey responses. However, at around 2.4 ha, the non-woodland area could easily accommodate more than 36 houses. The site's full allocation of 72 houses could be accommodated on this part of the site at a density of around 30 smaller dwellings per hectare. This has been achieved in parts of Carr-Bridge in the past. Alternatively, a development of around 50 houses could be delivered at a medium density of around 20 dwellings per hectare. However, the fewer the number of houses built on the site, the more likely it is that they would be larger, less affordable properties.
17. These considerations are significant, as the questionnaire has highlighted the importance of ensuring that any housing development adequately meets the needs of the local community. Whilst no detailed housing needs survey has been undertaken, a diverse range of house types and sizes, including a significant proportion of smaller and medium sized houses, would help to ensure this objective is delivered. It is therefore proposed that the Development Brief will outline an expectation for a full range of house types and sizes to be provided, and will indicate that the final density should be

determined through the development management process having regard to all relevant policies in the LDP and factors including local housing need.

18. The proposed Development Brief could also encourage the developer to consider 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), as there has been some success with this approach elsewhere in the Park.
19. The questionnaire survey has also helped to highlight a range of other planning issues that are likely to be important considerations for any future development proposals on the site. In particular, the responses indicate that consideration should be given to the provision of a safe route to the primary school and to traffic safety issues on Carr Road. These are legitimate planning considerations. Initial investigations have been undertaken, and a potential off-road link to the primary school has been identified with an estimate of the costs of establishment. The Development Brief will therefore highlight the requirement for the developer to contribute towards delivering this link, along with ensuring appropriate traffic mitigation measures on Carr Road.
20. The remaining measures that questionnaire respondents have identified as being important are generally all covered by specific policies within the LDP. However, in common with the adopted Development Briefs for other sites within the LDP, the proposed Development Brief for the HI site will provide further guidance on matters including: community identity; phasing of development; sustainable build and energy requirements; open space and landscaping; services and drainage; and biodiversity.
21. The proposed Draft Development Brief for the Carr-Bridge HI site, which covers the issues discussed above, is set out at Appendix 4.

### **Next Steps**

22. We propose that the Draft Development Brief for the Carr-bridge HI site will be published for a six week period of public consultation, which is expected to commence in October 2016. The consultation will be publicised within the local community and on CNPA's website.
23. All consultation comments will be summarised and used to inform the final Development Brief. The consultation comments and a proposed final Development Brief will be reported back to the Planning Committee for adoption. Once adopted, the Development Brief will form non-statutory planning guidance and will be a material consideration for the future development of the HI site. It is anticipated that the proposed Development Brief will be reported back to the Planning Committee for approval in early 2017.

**David Berry & Dan Harris**

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[davidberry@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:davidberry@cairngorms.co.uk)

[danharris@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:danharris@cairngorms.co.uk)

## **Appendices**

1. Carr-Bridge LDP Extract
2. Site Location Plan
3. Copy of Informal Questionnaire
4. Draft Carr-Bridge HI Development Brief