



# Newtonmore HI Development Brief

Supplementary Planning Guidance



## Planning in the Cairngorms National Park

Planning in the Cairngorms National Park is unique. It involves the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) working alongside the five local authorities which operate in the Park – Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray and Perth & Kinross.

Due to the expansion of the National Park in October 2010, to take in part of Perth & Kinross, different planning policies apply there.

The following paragraphs set out what planning policies apply in the National Park, and how planning applications will be dealt with.

### **Planning Policies**

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, and this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), covers the Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland and Moray parts of the National Park only. This SPG 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 the policies in the Local Plan and other relevant SPG.

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan and this SPG does not cover the Perth & Kinross area of the Park. The Perth & Kinross Highland Area Local Plan, or the Perth & Kinross Eastern Area Local Plan, and any associated SPG, apply. Please see [www.pkc.gov.uk](http://www.pkc.gov.uk) for further information.

### **Planning applications**

All planning applications submitted within the Cairngorms National Park must comply with the relevant Local Plan and SPG (see paragraphs above on planning policies for details).

Planning applications should be submitted to the relevant local authority in the normal manner. The local authority ensures all the necessary information is supplied and registers receipt of the application. The CNPA is informed by the local authority and 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. The CNPA determines called-in applications. In instances where planning applications are not called-in, the local authority will determine the application.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** This site is allocated in the Cairngorms National Park 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 Newtonmore and is outlined in red in the location plan below (Fig 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 in 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** This development brief provides guidance on the main planning and design principles for development on the site and should be based upon the following:
- 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;
  - As supplementary planning guidance, this development brief will be a material planning consideration in determining planning applications. It provides a clear indication of the requirements and expectations that the planning authority will take into account.

## 3.0 Site description

- 3.1** The site has a number of features, constraints and opportunities to take into account when considering potential development (see Fig 2, Constraints and opportunities plan, p7);
- The site is approximately 5.2 ha (13.03 acres)
  - 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



View from south to north across the site

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 design 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 site has development constraints but also potential opportunities for development of the site. These are further illustrated in Fig 2, Constraints and opportunities plan, p7.

#### 4.2 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 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.
- 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 will be required for the site, as areas of the site around the southern boundaries are identified as potential areas at risk of flooding by the SEPA Indicative Flood Map. Development should not be sited in the area of potential flood risk.

### 4.3 Services

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

### 4.4 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 gives an opportunity for a variety of house types and styles. In addition, 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. There has been some success with this approach elsewhere in the Park.

### 4.5 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 5.12 Biodiversity, p11)
- There are no statutory natural heritage designations (SSSI) on the site.



## 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 (see Fig 3, p12). These requirements emerge from the planning policy framework and the specific constraints and opportunities of the site.

### 5.2 Developer contributions

- Developers should make themselves aware of likely development contributions required within the community, where the need arises to increase or improve public services, facilities or infrastructure due to the development.
- While there remains an aspiration within the community for the A86 to bypass the village centre, any transport intervention requiring Scottish Ministers/Scottish Government/Transport Scotland consent and/or funding, would be required to undergo an appropriate transport appraisal. Any associated development contributions relating to this would then be negotiated.

### 5.3 Affordable housing

- A proportion of the total number of units on the site should be provided as affordable housing. The proportion sought will be 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 planning authority and Housing and Property Services at The Highland Council to determine the requirements for this site.

### 5.4 Phasing

- A scheme of phasing must be agreed between the planning authority and the developer, reflecting the capacity of the site, the Local Plan housing land supply requirement and market, community and other relevant factors.



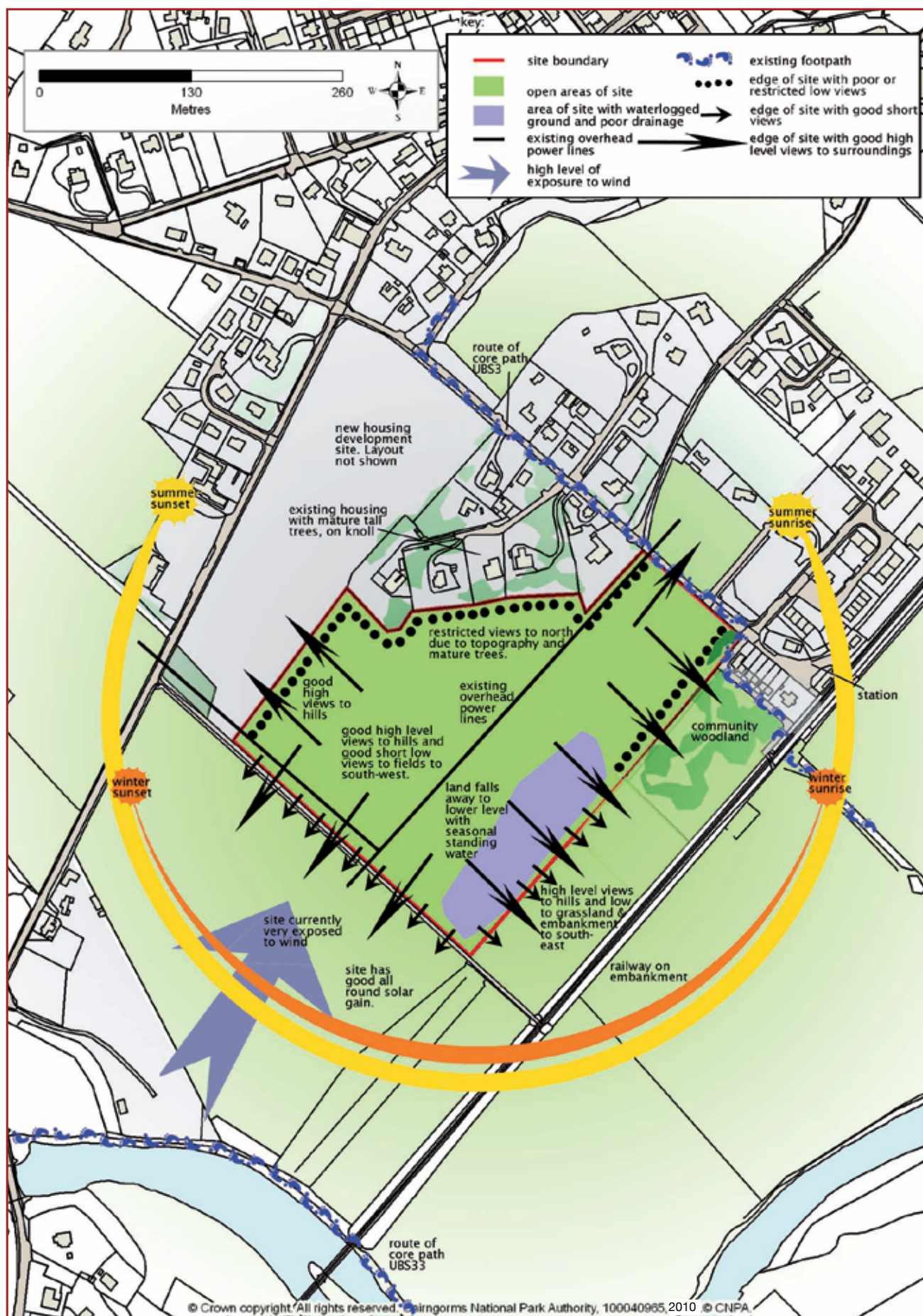


Figure 2 Constraints and opportunities plan



View from south along south eastern boundary

### 5.5 Density and diversity

- A variety of house sizes and flexible design that can help meet the changing needs of inhabitants over time, can provide long-term housing solutions, which contribute to stable communities.
- The site should include a variety of density of development and housing types.
- Due to the topography, ground conditions and varying housing types, density should vary over the site, with high density development in the western corner, adjacent to the new housing development. Housing density and location is illustrated in the Requirements plan (see Fig 3, p12).

### 5.6 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 should be enhanced and complemented by the new development.
- Prominent views, from outside the boundaries of the development and within, should be identified and used to delineate public and private space.

### 5.7 Exemplary development

- Development should be of a good quality, sustainable design which befits that expected of a National Park. It should not be a bland 'suburban' design. Innovative, modern design, relating to its location, is encouraged.
- Developers should recognise the significant opportunity to provide high quality, well designed development with a considered approach to densities, form and layout, including significant areas of public green spaces.

### 5.8 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 experiences. An explanation of the proposed development's relationship to the existing settlement should be included in a design statement.



Community woodland and railway embankment beyond south eastern site boundary

- Variety and richness of size and shape of houses and material use is required, ensuring that building shapes reflect the principles and proportions of traditional housing in the area. Alternating building heights are acceptable from 1 to 3.5 storey.





Example of potential streetscape layout

- 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 and 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 its identity of 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.



Standing water to south east of the site

- 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.

### 5.9 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 will 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 Station 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. They should be screened or at the back of building clusters.
- The development should be accessible, well connected and linked to the existing settlement. The footpath and cycle way network should be part of the landscaping infrastructure with through routes and connections to the wider road and path network encouraged, including core paths and 'safer routes to schools'.

### 5.10 Sustainable build and energy requirements

- The design of all development should seek to minimise 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](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk) for further information.
- Appropriate on-site renewable technologies should be used to strive towards a zero or low carbon development.

### 5.11 Open space and landscaping

- The site must include a comprehensive series of open spaces, all linked by the footpath and cycleway network to peripheral green space and areas outwith the boundary;



Site boundary with Station Road

- Developers should refer to the Cairngorms National Park Supplementary Planning Guidance on Open Space ([www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://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
  - natural/semi-natural green spaces
  - structural tree planting
  - supporting shrub and herbaceous planting
  - high quality social spaces, such as areas of public art, allotment/community growing space or other public space
- 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;
- Further natural green space should be retained to conserve and enhance existing biodiversity.

### 5.12 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](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)). This must 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 consider the inclusion of bird and bat nesting boxes and spaces.

### 5.13 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 within 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



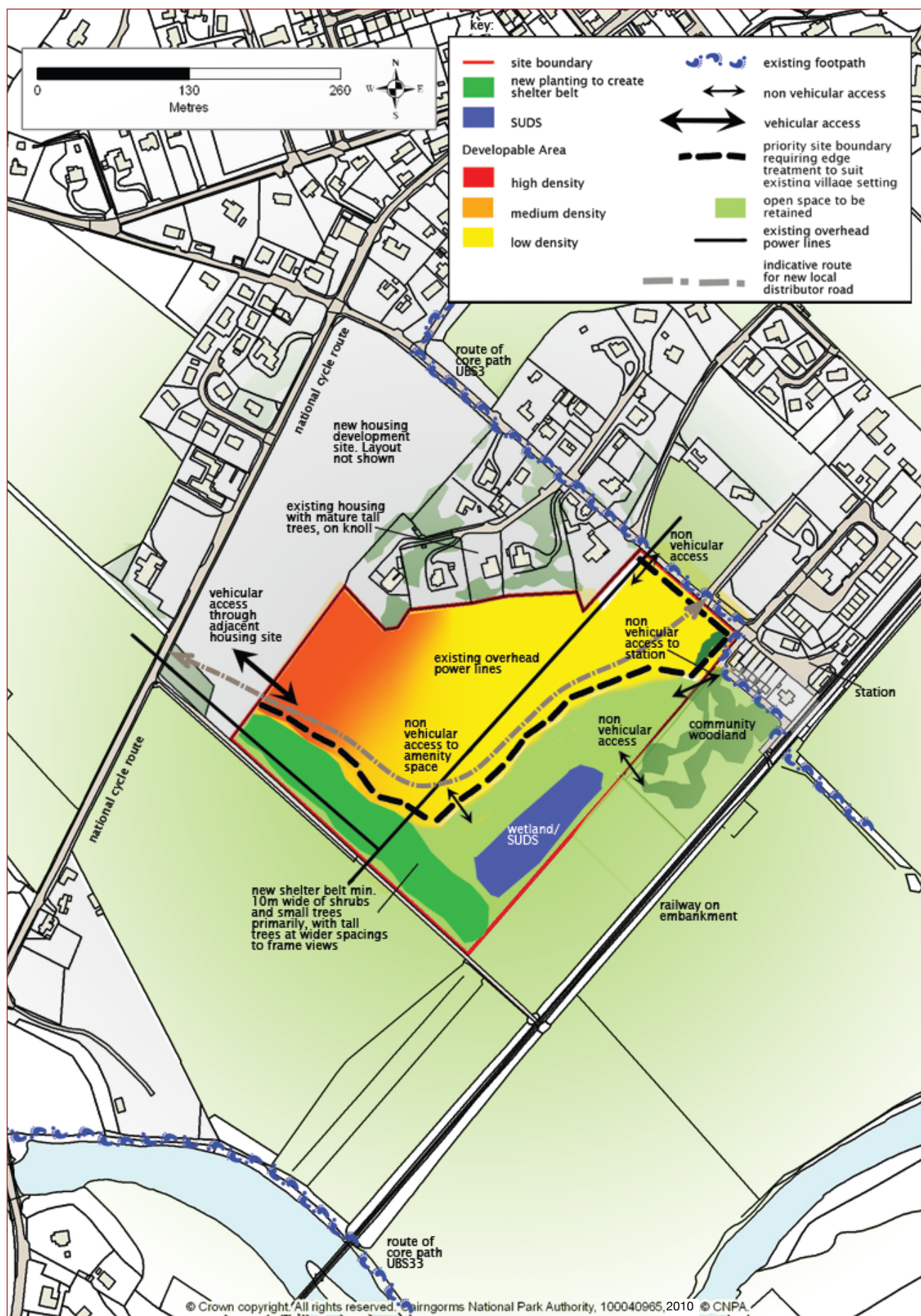


Figure 3 Requirements plan (for indicative purposes)



### 7.0 Policy context

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:

#### National Planning Guidance

- The consolidated Scottish Planning Policy 2010 and its thematic sections
- Best practice is set out in Planning Advice Notes. These cover a variety of topics and are available at [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)
- 'Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland', Scottish Government
- 'Designing Streets: A Policy Statement for Scotland', Scottish Government

#### The Cairngorms National Park Plan

- The Cairngorms National Park Plan provides an overarching context for development planning and management within the Cairngorms 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.

#### 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.

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance


In addition to this development brief, the CNPA is developing other supplementary planning guidance, which should be complied with in any development proposals. These include the following:

- Sustainable Design Guide
- Renewable Energy
- Developer Contributions
- Natural Heritage
- Open Space
- Affordable Housing
- Water Resources
- Carbon Emissions
- Core Paths Plan

### 8.0 Useful contacts

Cairngorms National Park Authority - Planning Ballater office, tel: 013397 53601

The Highland Council - Planning Badenoch and Strathspey office, tel: 01540 661700



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