



Grantown-on-Spey 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 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 50 dwellings. It is designated as site HI.
- 1.2 The site is located in Granttown-on-Spey and is outlined in red in the location plan below (Fig 1).



Figure 1 Granttown-on-Spey 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:
 - The site is known to be used by wading birds and has a rich diversity of plant species present. More detailed survey work to establish its ecological importance, and the potential impact of any development is, required;
 - As supplementary planning guidance, this development 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 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 4.16ha (11.39 acres);
 - The site occupies a sensitive hillside location, with the land rising up to the west, away from Granttown-on-Spey, in a succession of more gently sloping terraces with steeper slopes in between;
 - The lowest level to the east of the site remains fairly level from north to south. From the high point of the site, in the middle of the western boundary, the land slopes gently downwards to the south and more significantly to the north;
 - The site vegetation consists of unimproved grassland with little tree cover, except for a remnant hedgerow along the field boundary to the north containing Aspen. The flower-rich grassland should be retained where possible within the development to maintain diversity.
 - At the centre of this boundary lies an isolated house with a 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;



View from west to east over the site



Beachen Court terminating on site boundary

- Beyond the eastern boundary lies a large house in extensive wooded grounds. To the south lie two modern housing estates. 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 most of 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.

4.0 Site constraints and opportunities

4.1 The site has a number of development constraints but also potential opportunities. These are further illustrated on Figure 2, Constraints and opportunities plan, p7.

4.2 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 and farmland, and hills to the north. There are no long views to the west due to the woodland. 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. However, these are effected 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. This will require 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 achieve low energy housing. The site is exposed to north easterly winds, but is sheltered from the prevailing south westerly winds by woodland.
- The site has a number of clearly established 'desire line' paths crossing it, some of which are shown in Figure 2, see p7. This includes one to core path LBS5. All these paths should be retained in the development, with appropriate external links included to maximise the opportunity to promote and enhance recreational experience from within the site and from adjacent development.

4.3 Development opportunities

- The development of the site presents an excellent opportunity for large and small scale developers to work together. This gives an 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) should be given careful consideration. There has been some success with this approach elsewhere the Park.

4.4 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 5.12 Biodiversity, p10).
- As noted above, existing evidence points to the presence of wading birds, and a rich diversity of plant species. 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.
- The existing Aspen on the site should be retained and opportunities for enhancement by new mature species planting undertaken.
- There are no statutory natural heritage designations (SSSI) on this 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, p11). 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.

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 The Highland Council's Housing and Property Services to determine the current 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.

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 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 (see Fig 3, p11).

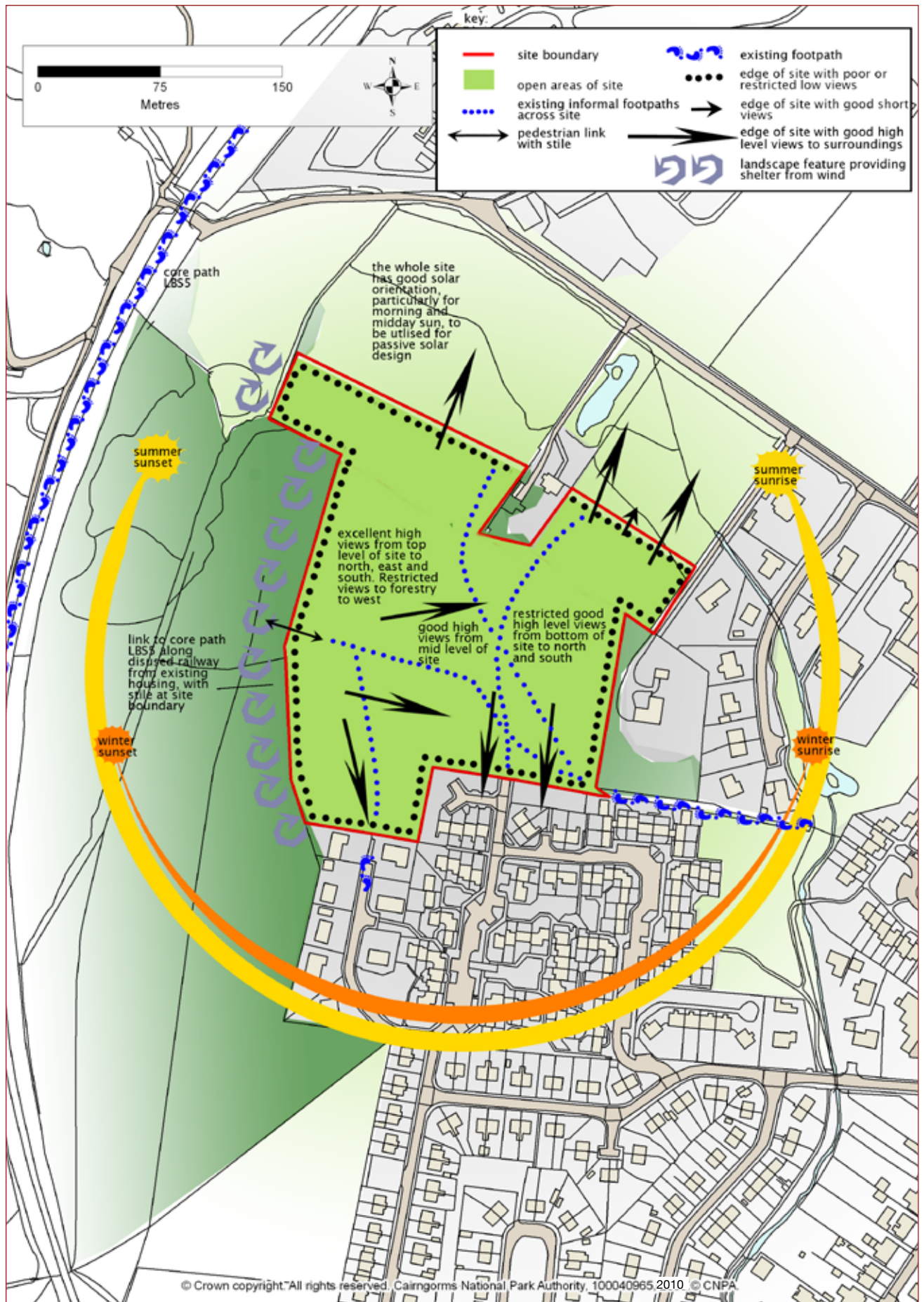


Figure 2 Constraints and opportunities plan

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 and the existing character of Grantown-on-Spey should be enhanced and complemented by the development.
- Prominent views, from outside and within the boundaries of the development, 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 public green spaces.

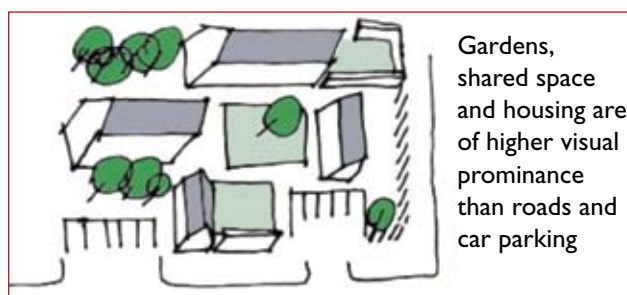
5.8 Informed design

- 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.
- 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. Building heights are acceptable up to 1.5 storeys.



View south from high ground near to the western boundary

- Building clusters should be formed and focused on external amenity space. Amenity space should be designed to be useable.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.



Gardens, shared space and housing are of higher visual prominence than roads and car parking

Example of potential streetscape layout

- Boundaries of the proposed development are particularly important; any of which form the edge of a settlement are important to its identity 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.



Footpath crossing site towards northern boundary

- 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 towards the northern boundary should be retained or reinstated.

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 is expected to be 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 The Highland Council. Options for alternative access are from Seafield Avenue and developers should

make themselves aware of options and challenges for access at an early stage. A Transportation Assessment will 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 Revoan 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 settlement. The footpath and cycle 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 (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 cycle network, to peripheral green space and areas outwith the 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
 - 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.
- 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 Granttown-on-Spey. These should be carefully sited to preserve but frame views.
- 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). This must 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 should consider the inclusion of bird and bat nesting boxes and spaces.

5.13 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.

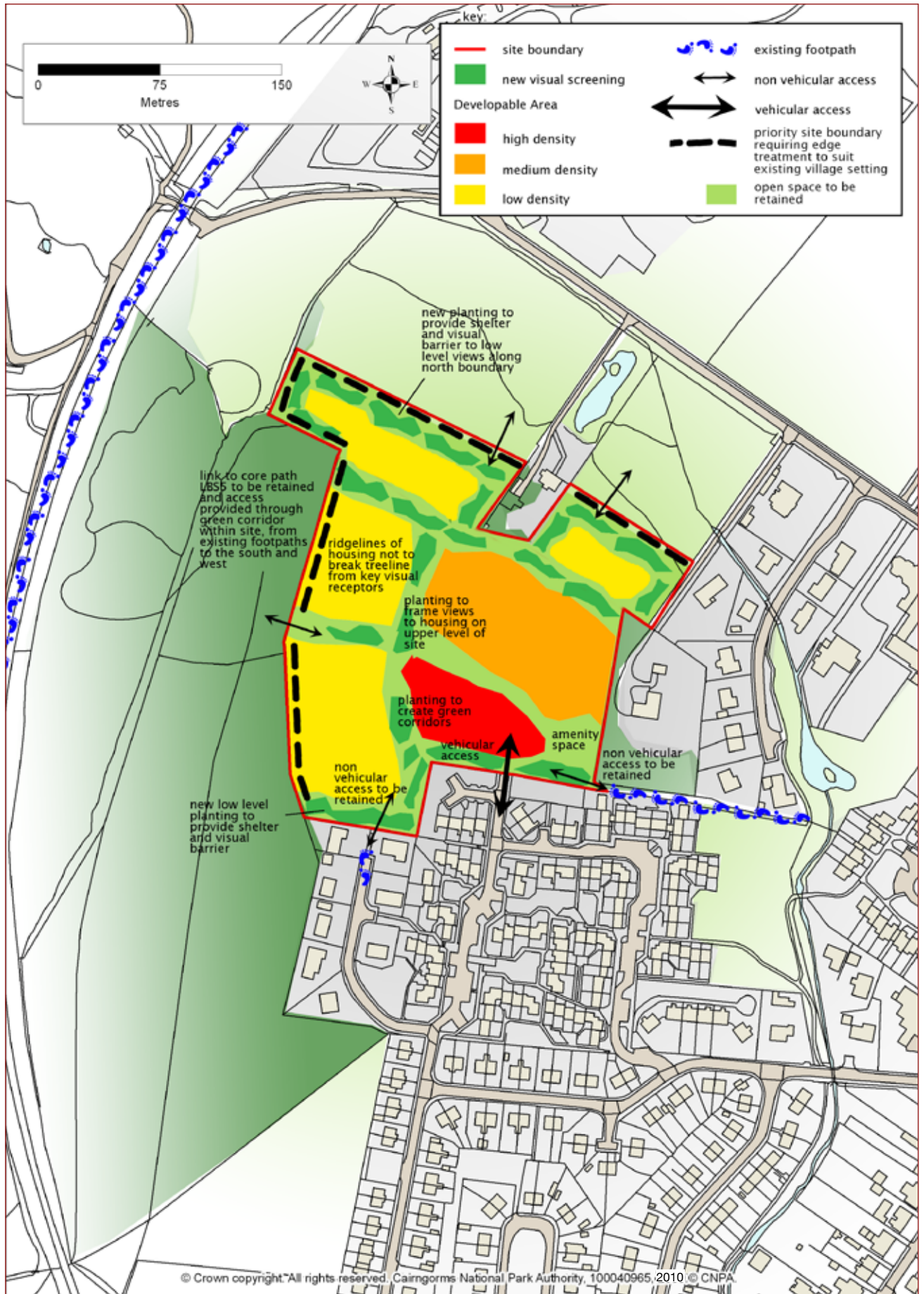


Figure 3 Requirements plan (for indicative purposes)

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 1 ground conditions survey
- Drainage assessment
- Ecological and biodiversity survey
- Transportation assessment

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
- ‘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
- 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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