

MINTLAW

SITES M1/EH3 MASTERPLAN



Bancon Developments

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1. Introduction

This report, along with the various appendices and drawings constitutes a masterplan for sites M1 and EH3 in Mintlaw, as identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2012.

Mintlaw is identified in the Local Development Plan for significant expansion over the next 11 years, to maximise the efficient use of local infrastructure (in particular excellent transport links and secondary school capacity), and take advantage of its location close to the Energetica Corridor from Peterhead to Aberdeen, where policies and procedures are in place to attract economic growth.

Expansion to both the north and south of the village is proposed in the Local Development Plan, and a Development Framework has been prepared in partnership by the developers and agreed by the Council. The Local Development Plan thereafter requires the preparation of a masterplan for sites M1 and EH3.

The masterplan provides more detail on the development of the sites, including design principles, phasing, and delivery. It will provide a basis for the determination of planning applications for individual phases and elements of the development in due course, to ensure an appropriate and consistent approach is adopted for the site, ensuring an attractive and sustainable place is the result.

This report will consider in some detail the existing site, and the opportunities and constraints that provides. Basic principles of how the site should be developed are then explored, before a detailed plan for the site is introduced.



Fig 1 – Mintlaw village centre – formerly a diamond arrangement, now a roundabout.

2. Mintlaw

The village of Mintlaw lies 8 miles to the west of Peterhead at the crossroads of the A952 Aberdeen to Fraserburgh route and the A950 Peterhead to New Pitsligo road. It has a population of 2620 (2006 Census). The village contains a broad range of services and facilities including retail facilities located in the village centre, pubs and hotels, a secondary school, 2 primary schools, a health centre, library, recreation and leisure facilities, and a country park.

Mintlaw celebrated its bi-centenary in 2013. The original village was arranged around the village square, which (due at least in part to the amount of through traffic) has reverted to a roundabout in recent times. A planned improvement project to the square has been recently proposed, to address both the aesthetic quality of the village centre and road safety. The planned expansion of the village will provide the necessary funding to implement these improvements.

In the 1860s, the introduction of the railway prompted further expansion of Mitlaw, but detached from the village, to the west, and known as 'Mintlaw Station'. The two villages were separate entities until the 1970s. The 1980s saw rapid expansion, most notably with the introduction of a large number of pre-fabricated homes to the southwest of the village centre.



Fig 2 – 1980s pre-fab housing.

Mintlaw Academy was constructed in 1981, providing secondary education for a large catchment area. It is of substantial size, and could cater for a larger population than it currently serves. (The designed capacity of 1000 pupils means the school could cater for in excess of 1,500 additional houses in the area without any physical expansion).

3. Context

3.1 Site Description

The development site is located to the south of the village, on land which slopes from Nether Aden Road, down towards the South Ugie Water. The zoned land totals 55 hectares. Currently in agricultural use - falling within Classes 3(1) and 4(1) of the Macaulay Classification for agricultural capability, meaning that parts of the site are suitable for a moderate and narrow ranges of crops respectively. The fields are defined by mature tree belts which provide a distinctive character to the site, and also set out natural development areas. Towards the southern extremity is the attractive flood plain of the river. The northern and eastern boundaries are defined by the public road to Aden Country Park and the A952 Aberdeen to Fraserburgh route respectively, with the boundaries delineated by mature trees. The western boundary coincident with a belt of mature structure tree planting.



Fig 3 – site location

The adjoining land uses are primarily residential to the north and east, and agricultural to the south and west. Aden Country Park adjoins the site to the north-west.

A desktop study has been undertaken to identify any features of archaeological significance and this has highlighted the discovery of 2 oak coffins towards the south eastern corner. These had been well preserved within the saturated ground within which they were located, and have now been removed.

The village's sewage treatment plant lies at the south-east corner of the site.

3.2 Planning Policy Review

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2014

The Strategic Development Plan sets out the strategy for delivering 72,000 new homes in the Aberdeen City Region by 2035. This identifies that half of the development will be in Aberdeenshire, and half of that will be in defined Strategic Growth Areas. The remaining requirement will be delivered in Local Growth and Diversification Areas, into which Mintlaw falls: -

“Local growth and diversification areas”

“The towns and villages in this area are important assets to the North East and reflect the different roles they have played over time.”

“Fishing, farming and forestry are important sectors of the economy. However, there is a need for diversification and growth in the economy in this area to meet local needs, with tourist-related developments having a role to play. Encouraging employment growth in these areas is a central part of making them more sustainable and reducing the need to commute, with its economic, social and environmental consequences.”

“Levels of growth in individual settlements should relate to local needs, although the scale of this growth will vary from place to place. While we should aim to provide a mix of housing opportunities for everyone, we need to focus on providing smaller homes to buy or rent, and a significant amount of affordable housing. We need to give priority to mixed-use developments which respect the character of the landscape and local identity.”

Mintlaw offers excellent prospects for employment growth. Firstly, the settlement enjoys very good transportation links. Its location in central Buchan means that it is a hub for road connections linking Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Ellon, Turriff and Banff.

It enjoys convenient access in relation to the A90, which is 7 miles to the east, via the A950, and to the south via the A952 to Ellon. Both of these routes connect to the Peterhead to Blackdog Strategic Growth Area, where significant housing and employment land allocations are proposed. It is also the

focus for the Energetica Project, which is aimed at stimulating high technology economic development between Aberdeen and Peterhead. The allocation of housing and employment land at Mintlaw offers significant potential for the economic development benefits of the A90 corridor to spill over into the Local Growth and Diversification Area. This will allow the benefits to be felt in a greater range of settlements, rather than a more limited number.

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2012

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan identifies sites for development to deliver the requirements of the Strategic Development Plan. Section 4 – The Spatial Strategy states: -

“In the local growth and diversification areas, policy and proposals concentrate development on certain settlements, on a scale that will allow us to provide important infrastructure, and that is appropriate to the size of the community. We have made land allocations in areas where there is a specific need identified, mainly to provide opportunities to increase the numbers going to primary schools where these are dropping. We encourage rural development through a very wide range of measures, particularly in the rural housing market area, as defined on the proposals maps. In comparison, we limit rural development opportunities in the Aberdeen housing market area, particularly within the greenbelt.”

As described above, Mintlaw offers a logical opportunity for growth in the local Growth and Diversification Areas, and the Local Development Plan identifies it for significant expansion. Split over two major sites, and several smaller ones, the settlement is identified for 1135 new houses by 2023, in addition to sites for 134 houses carried forward from the Aberdeenshire Local Plan.

The Local Development Plan identifies the following key objectives for the village: -

- Enhance settlement’s role as rural service centre.
- Meet local needs (including provision of care for the elderly).
- Provide housing choice.
- Provide opportunity for employment and retail.
- Sustain existing local services.

The new allocated sites are identified as follows: -

- Site H1 is allocated for up to 600 houses in two equal phases, and include facilities for the elderly.
- Site M1 is allocated for up to 500 houses in two phases, with a first phase for up to 250 houses, business, community, services for the elderly, neighbourhood retail centre, and 5ha of employment land.
- Site H2 is allocated for up to 15 houses in the first phase of the plan.

- Site H3 is allocated for up to 20 houses in two equal phases.
- A development framework will be required to coordinate the development of sites H1, M1, H2 and EH3 with subsequent masterplans for sites H1, M1 and EH3.
- Site EH3 is carried forward from the 2006 Local Plan for 50 houses.

The masterplan therefore covers 550 houses in total, as it includes both the M1 and EH3 sites.

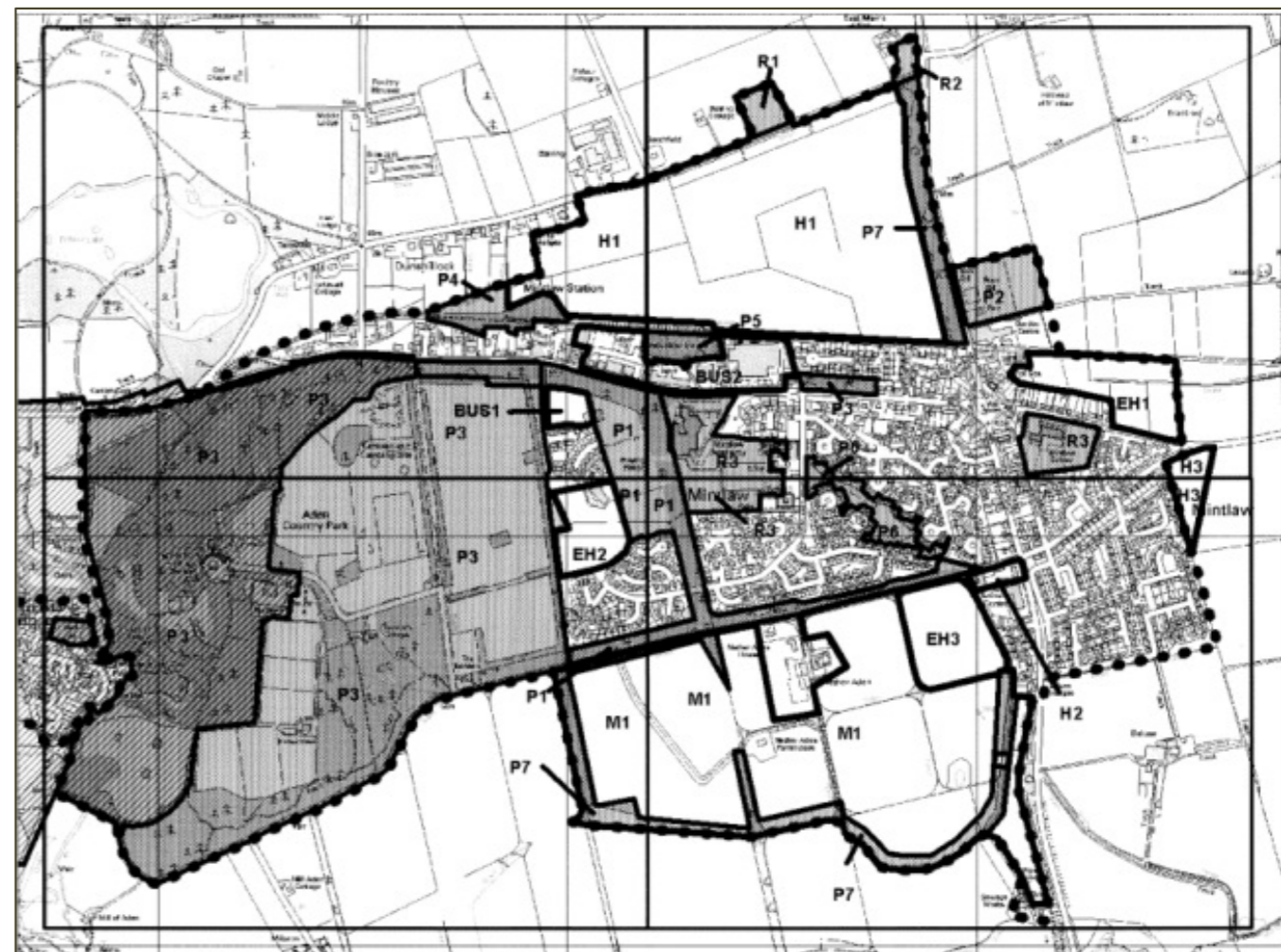


Fig 4 – Local Development Plan settlement map for Mintlaw.

The same allocations have been carried forward to the Proposed Local Development Plan 2016, which is due to be adopted towards the end of 2016.

3.3 Infrastructure Requirements

The large scale of the development proposed for Mintlaw will obviously create pressures on infrastructure, and requirements for new and improved provision. An Action Plan has been prepared to support the Local Development Plan. The requirements for Mintlaw are shown overleaf: -

INFRASTRUCTURE	SUB ACTIONS	TIMESCALES	LEAD DELIVERY	DEPENDENCIES/ PHASING	FURTHER INFORMATION	PRIORITISATION PHASING	PROGRESS
Education							
Mintlaw PS				Some limited capacity in Mintlaw PS and across network.	Roll anticipated to rise to 2016.		
Additional PS (170 facility with expansion opportunities to 235)	Site to be identified through masterplan for Site M1	Developer AC	AC Developer		Developments to the north of Mintlaw should notionally feed into Pittfour, however, due to the scale of development and capacity, a new primary school is required.		Please see section 2.4 below for more up to date information on primary school provision for Mintlaw.
	Delivery of new school.	By 2016					
Mintlaw Academy	No identified actions.			Sufficient capacity to accommodate development.			
Water – Turrif WTW							
Network investigation required.	Developer(s) should make early contact with SW.			Development of this scale will have a substantial effect on the capacity at Turrif WTW as well as network infrastructure.			
Waste water – Mintlaw WWTW							
Mintlaw WWTW	Upgrade required			Currently insufficient capacity at Mintlaw WWTW.	There is a currently a growth project for Mintlaw WWTW in SR10.		
Transport							
Local transport requirements Site H1	Developer to consider through site layout.		Developer AC		Roundabout on A952/C5B at north of site. Speed limit extended. Additional access points from A952 south of proposed new roundabout. Two access points required on A5B to access site. Pedestrian/Cycle access required to Formartine and Buchan Way and thereafter on to A950 and Mintlaw Academy. C5B to be upgraded between A950 and A952.		
Local transport requirements Site M1	Developer to consider through site layout.		Developer AC		Roundabout required on A952. Speed limit extended to south of proposed new roundabout. Additional access points required from Netheraden Road. Improvements required at Netheraden/A953 junction. Upgrade of Netheraden Road to include pedestrian/cycle facilities to village centre.		
Environmental Improvement Scheme to A950/A952 roundabout.			AC		Funding: Through developer contributions.		

INFRASTRUCTURE	SUB ACTIONS	TIMESCALES	LEAD DELIVERY	DEPENDENCIES/ PHASING	FURTHER INFORMATION	PRIORITISATION PHASING	PROGRESS
Health							
Mintlaw Group Practice health centre extension			NHS Grampian		Funding – NHS Grampian and Developer Contributions		
Waste							
Household waste recycling centre and replacement depot to include a recycling bulking point.	Site identification (M1)	Through masterplan	Developer AC Waste Team				
Layout, siting and design							
Development framework Site H1, M1, H2 and EH3							
Masterplan Site H1							
Masterplan Site M1					Possible requirement for land to be identified for potential new primary school.		
Masterplan Site EH3							

3.4 Development Framework

In line with the Local Development Plan, a development framework has been prepared to identify the measures required to enable the delivery of the allocated development in the village. It is notable that the requirement for education infrastructure was amended following community consultation, and the request of the Buchan Councillors, when considering the development framework in January 2012. The approved development framework therefore clarifies the position as follows: -

The ALDP identifies the need to address a projected shortfall in primary school capacity. A single new school with the capacity of at least 450pupils in the centre of the settlement, adjacent to Mintlaw Academy is preferred. The minimum size of the school campus will be 5 hectares. However, in the event that a single new primary school is not built adjacent to Mintlaw Academy, there are two potential alternative solutions to addressing this shortfall, as follows: -

- a) Construction of a single primary school to serve the whole of Mintlaw on either site M1 or site H1.*
- b) Contributions towards improvement and expansion of both existing primary schools.*

Early discussions with the local community indicates that a single new school for the village in a central location would be the preferred option, however the purpose of this Development Framework is to safeguard all of the potential options in the meantime. The sites identified for a new school must also be of a sufficient size to accommodate a potential library for the community.

Note: each of these alternatives would be led by Aberdeenshire Council as the delivery agent, and contributions towards the delivery would be calculated on a per house basis from all development within the Development Framework area.

The full development framework is appended in section 6 of this report as appendix 1. It forms the basis for the development of the masterplan for sites M1 and EH3.

3.5 Conclusions from Section 3

3.5.1 Analysis

Following from section 2.1, the main factors to be considered in developing the masterplan are: -

a) South facing slope – sustainability.

The whole site faces south, maximising the opportunities for passive solar gain for properties. The majority of the streets should be laid out in an east to west direction to maximise the use of this natural resource, and increase the sustainability of houses.

b) Great views to river and up valley.

With the south facing slopes come fabulous views of the South Ugie Water and the surrounding countryside.



View to the south west from the southern edge of the development site

c) Existing tree belts.

Mature tree belts between fields provide a unique character to the site, which should be retained and enhanced as part of the development. They will define specific blocks of development, and individual character areas



Mature tree belts between fields.

d) Access from north and east.

There are opportunities to access the site from the east, with a new roundabout on the A952, and also from the north from Nether Aden Road, with improvements to the junction of that road with the A952. Accessing residential areas from the tree lined Nether Aden Road will be particularly attractive.



Nether Aden Road, looking west

e) Requirements : Various Housing Offers, Commercial, Business, Community, School.

The allocation in the Local Development Plan for the site suggests a number of uses on the site. The main use will be housing, of which 25% must be affordable housing, including sheltered and/or very sheltered housing. In addition, there is a requirement for 5 hectares of employment land, as well as opportunities for commercial, community and retail development. There is a requirement to provide a potential site for a school, although the requirement is likely to be provided off site in due course.

f) Site EH3.

Site EH3 has been the subject of previous planning applications for development of around 65 houses, but permission has not been granted. As a stand-alone development, access to Nether Aden Road without a logical second point of access is awkward. It has therefore been incorporated into the masterplan for the area, with both landowners co-operating to achieve a more successful overall solution.

g) Existing properties provide constraints.

Existing properties within the site, and to the east of the site offer constraints to the accessibility of the development site. This had led to the strategy of taking access from the North West (onto Nether Aden Road) and East (onto the A952)

3.5.2 Synthesis

The key elements in the evolution of the masterplan are therefore: -

a) Retain all tree belts to give definition and provide natural character areas.

The tree belts provide a distinct character to the site, and also provide an excellent buffer between housing phases, to provide natural breaks in the built form of the final development. These belts also provide the opportunity for very attractive pedestrian and cycle routes through and in/out of the site, and will be bolstered with additional planting and formal foot and cycle paths.

b) Access : Main access from A952 with alternative from Nether Aden Road.

The principle access to the site should be taken from the east (A952) with a new roundabout to accommodate the increased traffic that the site will generate. However, additional access points on Nether Aden Road will provide local access for the residential areas and can enable early progress with the development of the site.

c) Position heavy traffic generators towards eastern access.

The masterplan should identify the areas closest to the new roundabout for the greatest traffic generating uses, such as employment land and the Park and Ride. This will reduce the requirement for industrial traffic to penetrate the residential areas.

d) Position retail centrally.

The location of the commercial/retail centre should be determined by the walking catchment it will cater for. The established 400m (5 minute) and 800m (10 minute) walking distances should be used to identify the appropriate location. This applies to the population generated by the new development and the existing population, as the greatest catchment will help to attract retail operators to invest earlier.



An existing track between mature tree belts. This feature will be utilised and enhanced.

e) Position sheltered and care home adjacent to facilities and walking routes.

There is an identified need for sheltered housing in Mintlaw, and the possibility of demand for a care home arising in due course. The location of sheltered housing should be carefully considered to ensure that residents can use the facilities on offer in the village. Locating sheltered housing and care facilities within a short walk of the retail/commercial areas, medical centre, and the footpath links to Aden Country Park and on-site public open space provision is essential.

f) Adopt Designing Streets and Designing Places to further define character of sites.

Designing Streets is considered in detail in section 4, and the concepts it promotes will be used to enhance the existing character of the site (with its mature tree belts) and create a genuine sense of place within the development. Designing Streets goes hand in hand with Designing Places, a policy document produced in 2001 by the Scottish Government. The principles of Designing Places seek to ensure places are: -

- distinctive
- safe and pleasant
- easy to move around
- welcoming
- adaptable
- resource efficient

The design decisions noted in this section will help to ensure that these principles can all be delivered.

g) Layout to exploit southern orientation and views

The layout of the site will be based upon an east to west street pattern, thereby ensuring that houses have at least one main elevation facing south, to benefit from passive solar gain and the tremendous views that are on offer.

3.5.3 Concept

From the above analysis and synthesis, a conceptual plan of the site has been developed, to identify the locations of the key land uses and densities, along with access priorities. Key requirements are the retention of the mature tree belts and exploitation of the southern aspect.

This conceptual plan has subsequently been developed in more detail into a masterplan, which is considered in section 4 of the report.

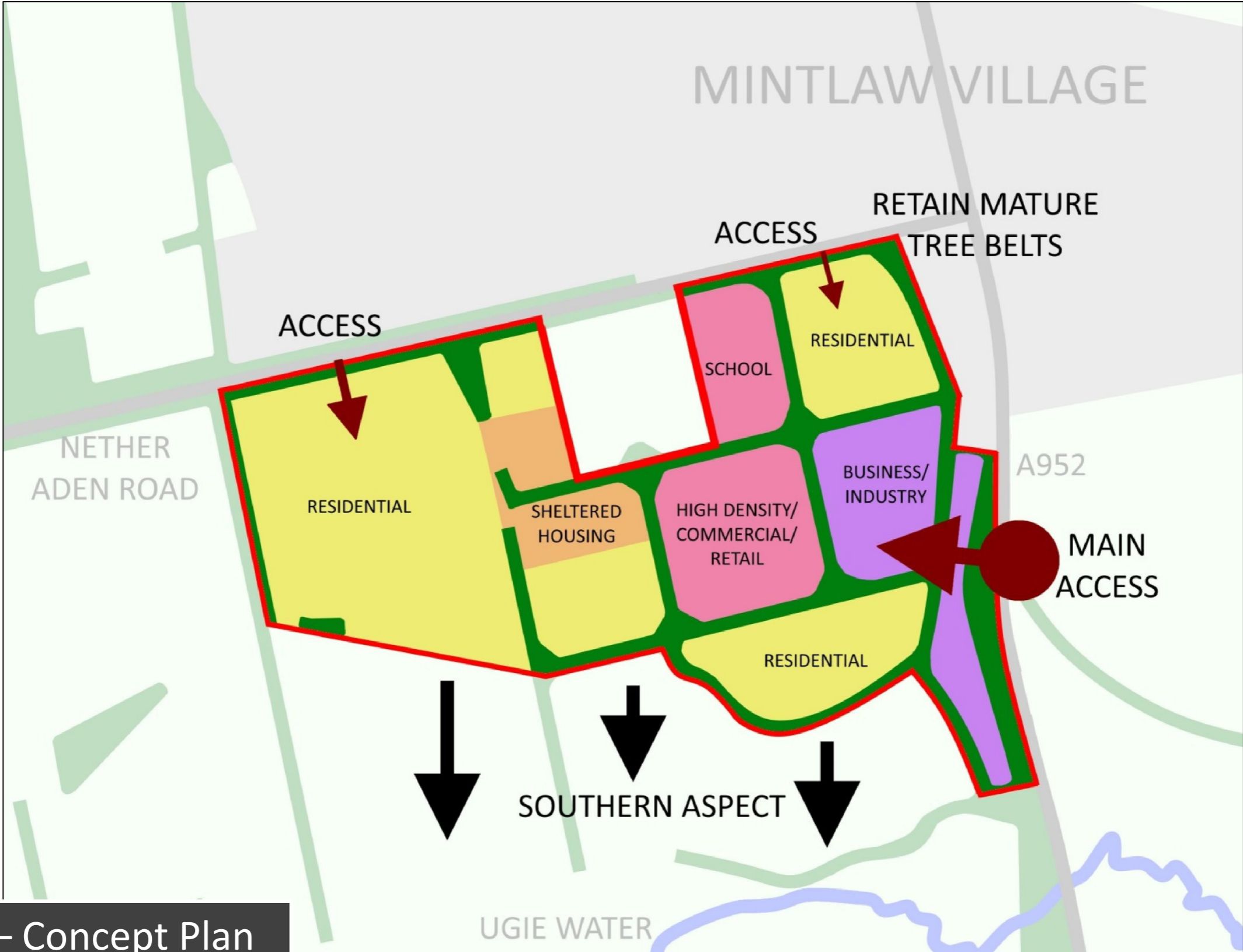


Fig 5 – Concept Plan

4 The Masterplan

The masterplan has been developed over a considerable period of time. The process of reviewing the Local Development Plan dictates that a degree of detailed planning must take place at the start of the process, in order to demonstrate the suitability of the site for development, and that the development content is appropriate.

Following the adoption of the Local Development Plan, and the preparation and approval of the development framework (see appendix 1), the masterplan has been revisited in much greater detail.

We have consulted widely with Aberdeenshire Council officials and other statutory consultees, utilising the Major Applications process offered by the Council. This was done in 2008 and again in 2012, to reflect the fact that the proposals have evolved over time. Similarly, we have consulted extensively with the local community over several years, most recently on the development framework in September 2011.

The masterplan is shown overleaf in Fig 7. How this integrates with the existing village is shown on the aerial photograph on the right (fig 6).



Fig 6 – masterplan imposed onto an aerial photograph of the village



Fig 7 - Masterplan

4.5 3D views



Fig 8 – 3D view looking NW across the site.

The retention of mature tree belts across the site will ensure an immediate landscape fit for the development. These will be complimented with new planting in areas of public open space to quickly create a very attractive and natural character. Of particular importance are the mature tree belts along Nether Aden Road to the North of the site, and alongside the route of the old road to the East of the site. The latter tree belt is protected by a woodland Tree Preservation Order, which will restrict any removal or alteration to trees to all but essential works to provide an access into the site.

The principle entrance to the site from a new roundabout on the A950 to the East will therefore be through mature trees, with a pleasant view along the linear park area that runs from East to West through the site. Fig 9 overleaf shows an impression of the entrance to the site.



Fig 9 – indicative 3D view of the entrance to the site from the A952

On entering the site, there is a strip of land between the A952 and the mature tree belt that bounds Nether Aden Farm, where the old road used to run. The northern part of this is proposed for the development of a modest area of housing, and the southern half is identified for a park and ride facility, and a replacement depot for Aberdeenshire Council. This will also incorporate household waste recycling facilities. This area is already well screened and enclosed by mature trees on all sides, and as a result the visual impact of a larger area of hardstanding and the depot buildings will be negligible.

Further into the site, housing on the South side is low density, and orientated to follow the semi-circular field boundary (known as the Serpent Field), which is marked with mature trees. The outlook from houses in this part of the site will be particularly attractive with views between the trees South towards the Ugie Water.

To the North, the highest density part of the site is arranged around a principle North to South street, with the opportunity for retail and office uses mixed with residential flats. At the Northern end of this street is a site for a primary school, located to be accessible from both the development and existing residential areas to the North of the site.

Further West into the site, the density of housing reduces, and the opportunity for a care home and sheltered housing is identified on the masterplan.



Fig 10 – indicative 3D view of the 'Serpent Field' housing.

Farthest west, the lowest density residential areas are proposed, with detached and semi-detached housing set in generous plots with ample landscaping to bolster the existing mature tree belts. Fig 10 shows this indicatively, and also shows how effectively the site will be screened from Nether Aden Road by the existing trees.



Fig 11 – indicative view of the northwest part of the site looking southeast.

4.2 Access and Connectivity

In terms of access and connectivity, it is important to consider the appropriate hierarchy of means of moving from place to place. Both Designing Places and Designing Streets set out the appropriate hierarchy of users, shown in Fig 12.

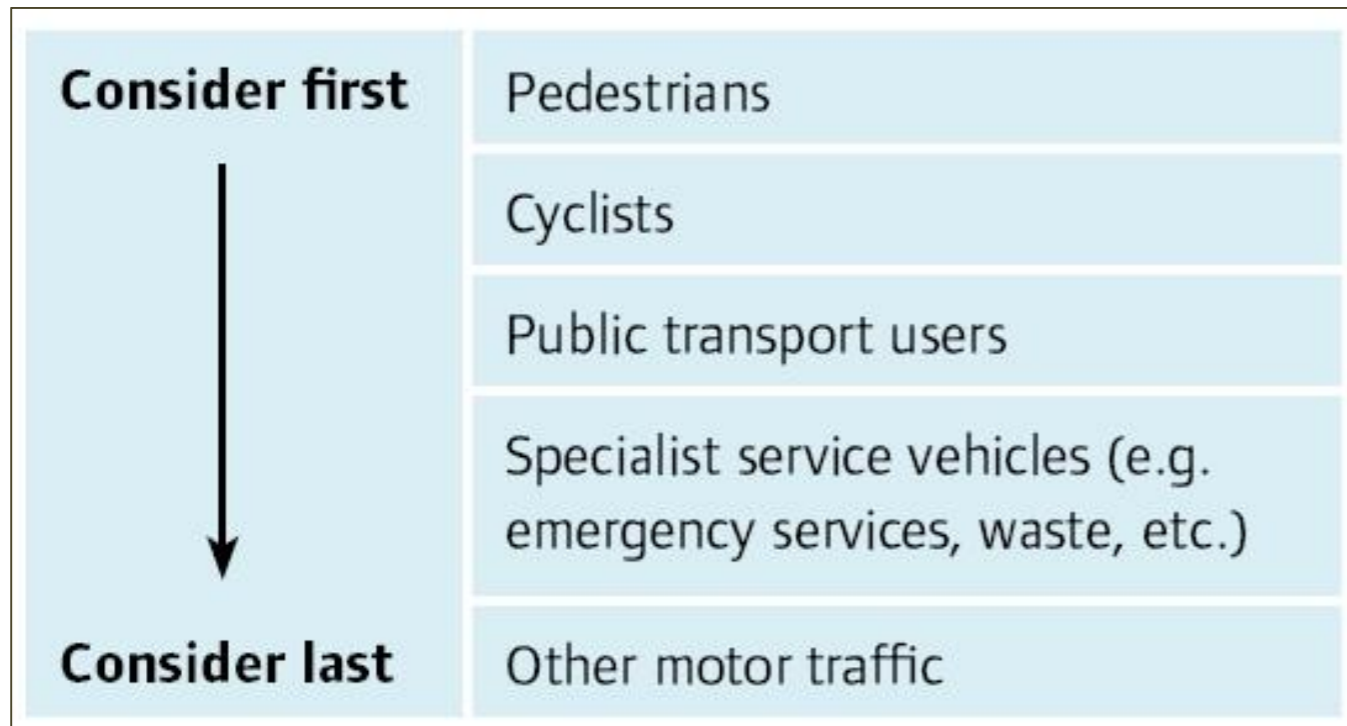


Fig 12 – Hierarchy of movement

In respect of this principle, it is logical to consider access and connectivity in this order of importance. Mintlaw has the benefit of being a fairly compact village with development centred around a major crossroads. There are several facilities towards the centre of the village, including the secondary school, library and medical centre, as well as shops. To the west of the village lies Aden Country Park which also provides a popular destination for walking and cycling.

In the early plans for the site, it was apparent that there was likely to be a conflict of users created by the necessary widening and improvement of Nether Aden Road along the northern edge of the site. However, the introduction of Designing Streets has led to a reconsideration of the character of this road, and the retention of it in its current form is now encouraged, as a means to naturally calm traffic speeds. The provision of an improved remote foot and cycle core path to the north of the road is proposed (much of this exists at present), and an emphasis will be placed on providing easy and safe access from the site to this path. The Core Path Plan for the Mintlaw area is shown in Fig 13.

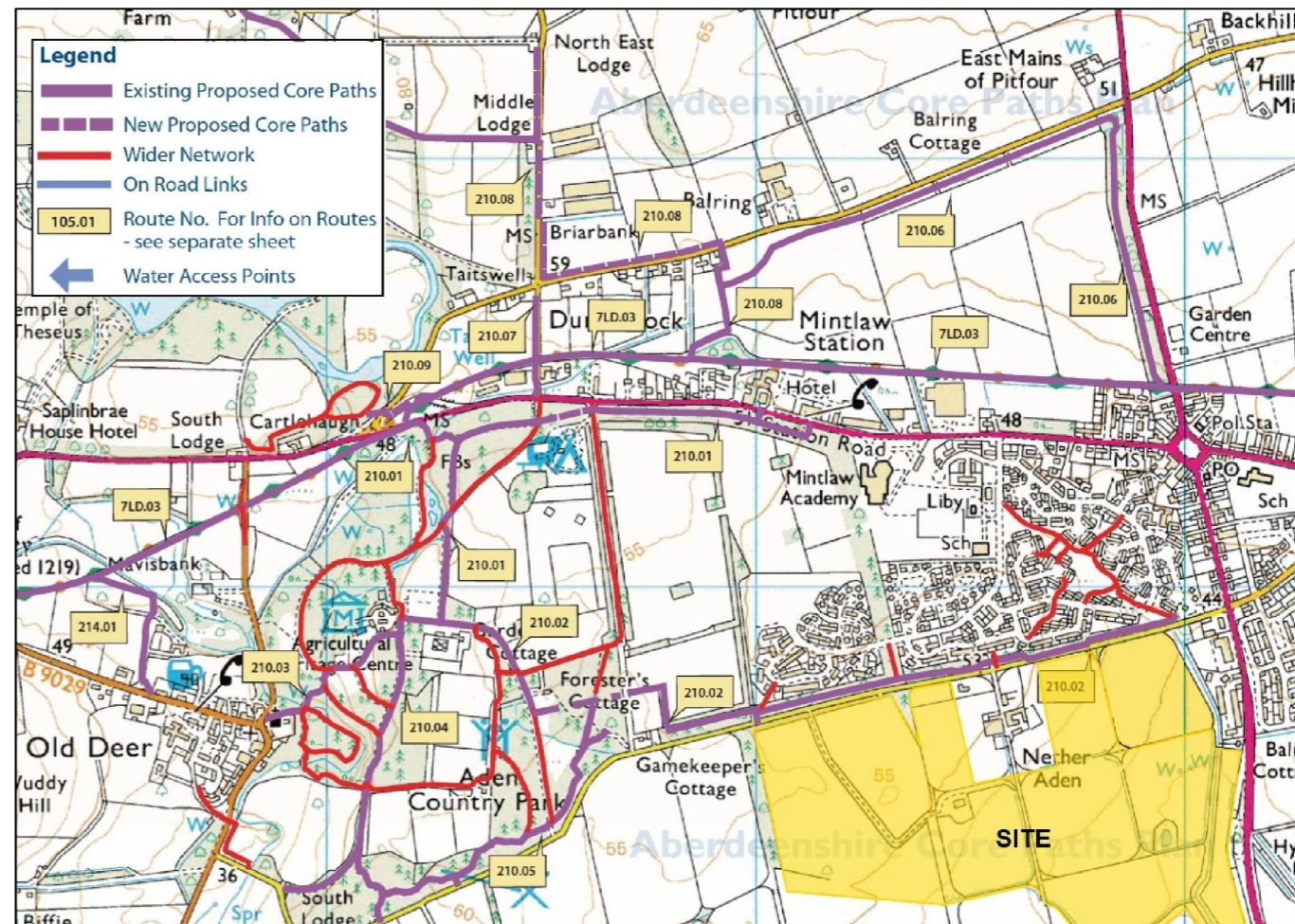


Fig 13 – Excerpt from Aberdeenshire Council’s Core Path Plan.

In addition to these important links, the site has the benefit of an attractive riverside area to the south, which will be accessed by a path network provided as part of the development. These routes will provide additional access to the wider countryside to the west, south and east of the development site, along with the provision of an attractive walk and cycle route. Whilst the purpose of this provision is primarily for recreation, it is an important element of the safe and attractive place we are aiming to create.

The aerial photograph overleaf (Fig 14) shows the site in context with the surrounding village and countryside areas, and the key destinations for walking and cycling, along with popular and proposed recreational paths and cycle routes.

This is one of the key strengths of the proposed development, and it is imperative that the pedestrian and cycle links and new routes are provided in a safe and useable manner to take full advantage of the range of facilities and beautiful countryside that Mintlaw provides.

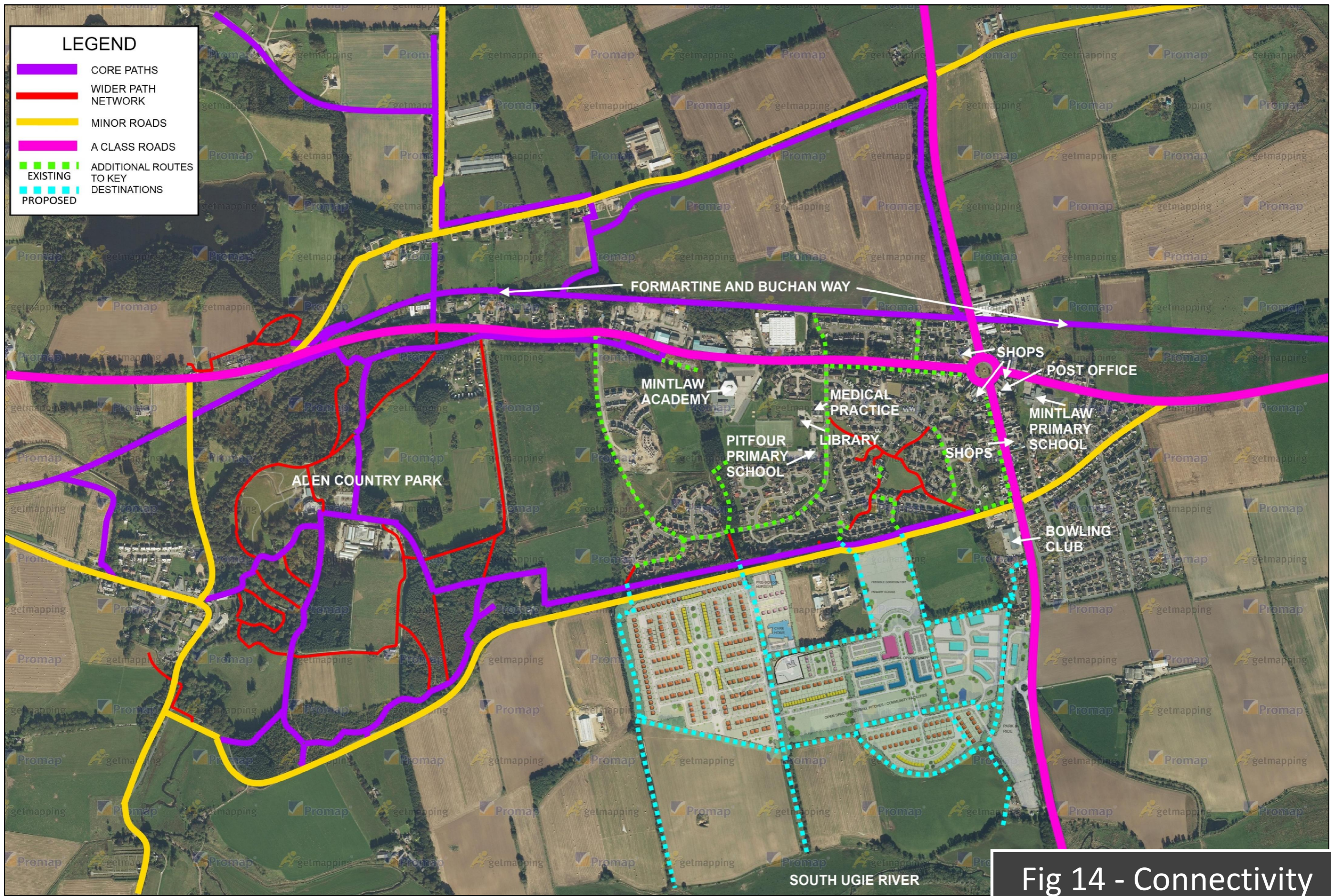


Fig 14 - Connectivity

4.3 Affordable Housing Strategy

The requirement for affordable housing on the site is 25% of the total development, therefore circa 125 units. Aberdeenshire Council’s Housing Service have identified the following preference for delivery of the requirement: -

- 70% (87 units) – Social Rent, comprising a mix of 1-5 bedroom properties
- 20% (25 units) – Low Cost Home Ownership, comprising a mix of 1-4 bedroom properties
- 10% (13 units) – Mid Market Rent, comprising 1, 2 and 3 bedroom properties.

The preference is for these properties to be integrated as far as possible with the mainstream housing development. There is an identified need for sheltered and very sheltered housing in the village, and provision of this would contribute towards the social rented element of the affordable housing provision.

We will endeavour to deliver the affordable housing in line with the above preference, but are conscious of the funding constraints facing registered social landlords at the present time. It is imperative that a failure to secure funding for social rented housing does not undermine the deliverability of the development, or indeed the affordable element of it, and an appropriate cascade mechanism shall be included in the S75 agreement to ensure there is an appropriate series of alternative delivery mechanisms.

4.4 Opportunity for Mixed Use

The Local Development Plan identifies the majority of the site as M1 – indicating mixed use. As well as the 500 houses, the allocation includes five hectares of employment land and business, community, neighbourhood retail uses, along with services for the elderly.

The location within the site for each of these uses is important, due to the compact nature of the village, and the movement patterns discussed in section 4.1. In order to maximise sustainability, as much of the mixed use provision must be provided within a suitable walking and cycling distance of its catchment area, thereby reducing the reliance on private car use.

The key elements to this are successfully locating the business, retail and community uses as close to the largest population as possible. This implies locating the employment land adjoining the A952, but also as close to the new population and as much of the old population as possible, while also locating the housing services for the elderly as close to the villages existing services as possible.

The following diagrams show these three principle land uses with 400m (5 minutes typical walk) and 800m (10 minute typical walk) radius circles marked, to show the realistic walking catchment of the locations.

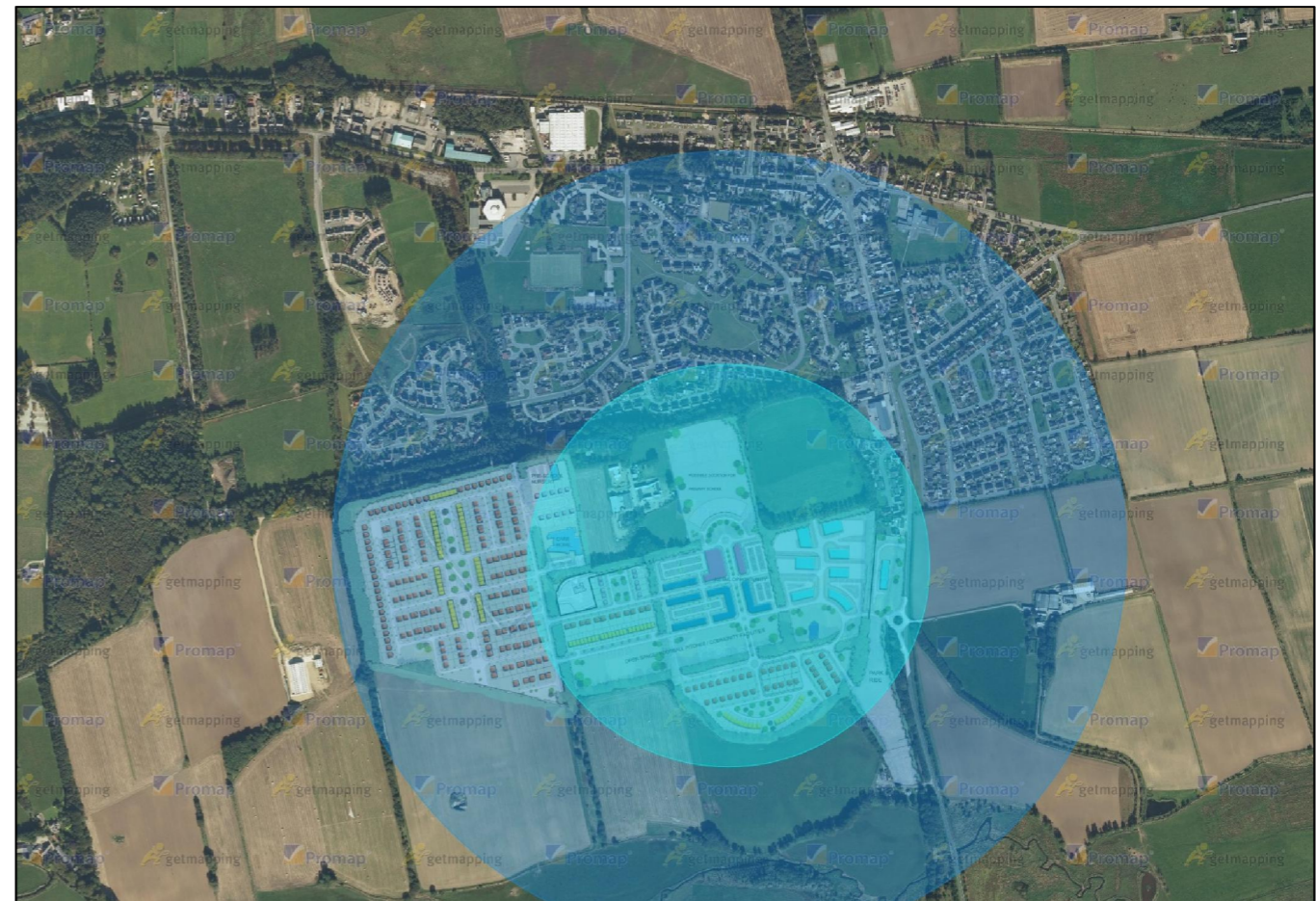


Fig 15 – 400m and 800m radius circles centred on the business, community and retail use opportunities.

Fig 15 demonstrates that the chosen location for the retail, business and potential community uses is perfectly situated to allow a reasonable walk from almost all of the existing village, and all of the new development site. It is further noted that the site earmarked for a potential replacement primary school is situated within this areas also. This area would also include the highest density housing development, with flats and terraced homes the prominent house type.

It is expected that the detailed planning applications will seek the development of retail and business uses with flats above them, to create a genuine mixed use core to the development, and provide an attractive and welcoming streetscape for pedestrians in particular.



Fig 16 - 400m and 800m radius circles centred on the employment land.

Fig 16 demonstrates the walkable neighbourhoods centred on the employment land elements of the development. The employment land is located in the east to allow the most efficient access from the A952 and the new roundabout. This plan shows that the majority of the existing village and proposed expansion on site M1 falls within a 10 minute walk of the proposed employment land, thereby making this an attractive alternative to using a car.

The proposals are planned to include a new business centre, as well as a business park with larger units. It is notable that the employment uses are within the 5 minute walking catchment of the proposed commercial area of the development, offering the opportunity to walk to shops from work.

A further consideration is the location of facilities for the elderly, with an identified demand for sheltered housing, and the potential for a care home in the longer term. The location of such development should offer easy access to the retail/commercial areas and also recreational facilities, including Aden Country Park. The following diagram (Fig 17) shows the 400m and 800m walking distances from the proposed sheltered housing and care home sites.



Fig 17 – 400m and 800m radius circles centred on the sheltered housing/care home.

4.5 Drainage Strategy

The surface water drainage strategy for the site is straightforward, due to the existing south facing nature of the site and the South Ugie Water located along the southern edge of Nether Aden Farm. A series of detention basins are proposed to collect surface water runoff and attenuate the discharge to the river as appropriate. The Drainage Impact Assessment is appended to this report in section 5, and considers the detail of this. The Drainage Impact Assessment will be updated to accord with the final masterplan as part of an application for planning permission in principle for the whole site.

Foul drainage proposals are also straightforward, with the existing waste water treatment plant located to the south east of the masterplan. Existing public sewers are identified in the appended engineering report (section 6). It is logical to pick up foul drainage along the southern edge of the masterplan, and utilise the existing slopes to link either directly into the treatment plant or into the existing sewer just to the north of it.

Works to increase the capacity of the waste water treatment plant will be required, and a Growth Project has been initiated by Scottish Water. Details of this will be addressed as part of an application for planning permission in principle for the whole site.

4.6 Open Space/Landscape

The Local Development Plan policy and associated supplementary guidance states: -

We will approve new development, subject to other policies, if the provision of open space reflects the hierarchy and standards set out in Appendices 1 and 2 in the Aberdeenshire Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and, in the case of major developments (of 50 or more dwellings, or of 2 hectares or more industrial, commercial or retail land), it is expected that 40% of the site will be provided for open space; or the developer must demonstrate that the site is a constituent part of an approved development framework or master plan in which 40% of the overall land is provided for open space.

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy sets out a hierarchy of open space, and requirements for development types. In Mintlaw, there is a development framework covering 1165 houses, with 550 zoned for this masterplan area. Fig 18 shows the requirements for this scale of development.

Number of Houses Proposed	Development Design Process*	Mix of Open Space (to meet total requirement) ▲ Type of Space	Minimum Number of sites	Distance of Each Type of Space from Houses in Catchment ▲ Guide	Total Space Required
600-1000	Scale 1 Devt framework Masterplan Detailed app	▼ Premier Park (1500 -2000 houses)	Upto 1	1000-1500m	40% of site
		▼ Local Park	1	600-1000m	
		▼ Organised Sports	1 or off site contribution	1500-2000m	
		▼ Community Play Areas	2-4	400m	
		▼ Community Food Growing Areas	30-50 /0.6-0.9ha	800m	
		▼ Burial Grounds	Where required in LDP	n/a	
		▼ Neighbourhood Greenspace	As Appropriate	n/a	
▼ Community Woodlands	As Appropriate	(500m)			
▼ Blue-green Corridors	As Appropriate	n/a			
▼ Neighbourhood Streets	As Appropriate	n/a			
250-599	Scale 2 Masterplan Detailed app	▼ Organised Sports	Upto 1	1500-2000m	40% of site
		▼ Community Play Areas	1-2	400m	
		▼ Community Food Growing	12-30/0.25-0.5ha	800m	
		▼ Burial Grounds			
		▼ Neighbourhood Greenspace	As Appropriate	n/a	
		▼ Community Woodlands	As Appropriate	(500m)	
▼ Blue-green Corridors	As Appropriate	n/a			
▼ Neighbourhood Streets	As Appropriate	n/a			

Fig 18 – open space requirements from the Parks and Open Space Strategy.

The M1and EH3 sites total 55 hectares, of which circa 27ha is identified as public open space. This equates to 49% of the masterplan area – exceeding the 40% required for scale 2 sites (fig 18). This is shown on fig 19 below. The site benefits from existing tree belts that mark the boundaries of the existing fields, and these will be retained and bolstered with additional planting. A large area of central open space is also proposed.



Fig 19 – Public open space provision

The open space requirement, and provision, falls into several categories. These are shown on fig 20, and include areas outwith the zoned development site because they contribute to the wider network of open space.

Not shown on fig 20 is Aden Country Park, which offers 570 hectares of outdoor recreation within easy walking or cycling distance of the development site. As part of the open space strategy for the site, pedestrian and cycle access to the park is a priority provision. However, access to the south, to the areas around the South Ugie Water, which contributes as a Blue/Green corridor is also proposed along the existing tree belts, with foot and cycle paths provided.



Fig 20 – open space hierarchy

Beyond the provision shown on this plan, further contribution will be provided from streets designed in accordance with Designing Streets, where shared surfaces prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over cars. Only the two principle landscaped streets have been identified as contributing to the open space provision, but the fact is that all of the streets in the residential areas will contribute. This would increase the provision of open space within the zoned land to around 50% of the site area.

In terms of the hierarchy of open space, the requirements are more than met within Mintlaw as a result of the existing Country Park and rural setting.

Local Park – 1-4 hectares in size, within 600-1000m of population.

This is provided for in the formal open space in the centre of the development site, which totals 5 hectares and is within 400m (5 minute walk) of all of the proposed new development. This is the requirement based on the Parks and Open Space Strategy, but with the inclusion of sports pitches the 5

hectares will also meet at least some of the criteria of a Premier Park. In addition, there is a Country Park (identified as required to serve a population of over 60,000) is available within a 1000m walking distance of all of the site. In terms of formal parks, therefore, the proposed development exceeds the minimum provision by a considerably margin.

Other Functional Green Space

Community Food Growing and Burial Grounds are not required within the development site, as the former is to be provided within Aden Country Park, and contributions made through Planning Gain. There are plans for a cemetery expansion in New Deer, to which contributions will be made as required.

Equipped Play Areas

An equipped play area is required for developments of 100-400 houses, within a 400m walk of all homes. This would indicate a need for two equipped play areas within the proposed development, but it is suggested that the provision of one more extensive play area, of around 5000sqm in area is provided within the Local Park area in the centre of the site. This will be within a 400m walk of most of the site and allow for a better provision of play equipment and a reduction in the maintenance burden. The plan below in fig 21 demonstrates how the Local Park may be laid out.



Fig 21 – Local Park provision

Organised Sports Facilities

As mentioned above, there is scope to provide two sports pitches within the Local Park, if these are deemed necessary when assessed as part of an application for Planning Permission in Principle. The potential primary school site also provides an opportunity for pitches within the campus, which would, based on recent community school developments elsewhere, be available for public use.

Neighbourhood Green Space and Community Woodlands

Both neighbourhood green space and community woodlands are provided within the site boundary through the use of and enhancement of the mature tree belts along the field boundaries. These will

provide an attractive opportunity to walk through the site between services and facilities. Outwith the site boundary, there are significant areas of existing woodland that are accessible by foot and cycle.

On Street Open Space

As mentioned above, the concept of Designing Streets is to prioritise pedestrian and cycle use within residential streets. As the site does not include bus penetration, it is a requirement for all of the streets to conform to Designing Streets, and as such they will contribute to the open space. The design approach to this is outlined in section 4.8.

Fig 20 highlights two particular areas where this approach is adopted. The western one will provide a north-south route through the residential area, and the eastern one will include landscaping to provide an attractive street with the commercial elements of the development available on the ground floors of buildings, and provide access to the public open space. The design will seek to restrict traffic speed to safe levels for use by motor vehicles, cycles and pedestrians.

4.7 Phasing

The intention is to seek to start both business and residential elements of the development at an early stage, utilising the existing Nether Aden Road for residential development and the proposed new roundabout from the A952 to serve the employment land. This approach avoids the need to complete the employment land, which may be constrained by market conditions, before any residential development can commence. The plan below shows the phasing proposals.

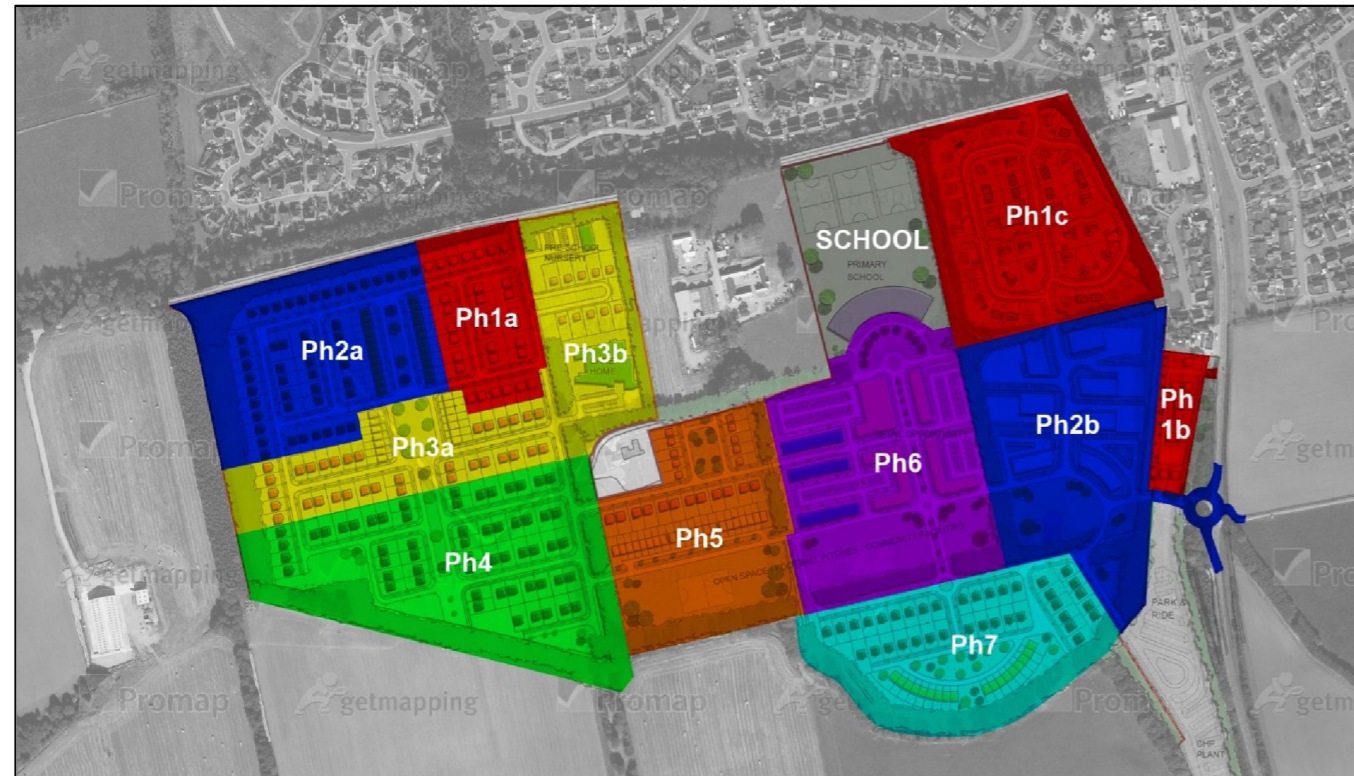


Fig 22 – Phasing proposals

The number of units proposed in each phase is shown in the table below. These numbers are indicative, and subject to clarification as part of the detailed planning application for each phase. The mix of housing within each phase will be determined on the basis of the market conditions, which will undoubtedly change over time with the level of growth proposed for the village, and the uncertain economic climate. It is not feasible or sensible to try to predict this at this stage.

Phase	Housing provision	Non-residential provision
Phase 1a	31	
Phase 1b	9	
Phase 1c	49	
Phase 2a	73	
Phase 2b		10,000sqm business premises
Phase 3a	47	
Phase 3b	10 sheltered	Care home, children’s nursery
Phase 4	57	
Phase 5	34 10 sheltered	
Phase 6	155 flats	Commercial, community, retail
Phase 7	55	
Total	530	

Fig 23 – indicative phasing schedule

This phasing strategy will enable phase 6 to be brought forward early, serviced from the western edge of phase 2b, should demand for flatted accommodation and/or commercial, community or retail development arise. This provides the necessary flexibility to ensure the successful delivery of a development of this scale in a relatively untested market.

The phasing plan also remains flexible with regard to the primary school site, which may or may not be required (please refer to the development framework for details on the school provision), and also the park and ride site. The school site could be accessed from Nether Aden Road or from the internal site layout, and could therefore be delivered at almost any stage of the development. The Park and Ride will be accessed from the new roundabout delivered as part of phase 2b, and therefore available at an early stage of the development. The south side of the park and ride site also includes household recycling facilities and a replacement depot site, which could be provided with or without the Park and Ride.

4.8 Infrastructure and Services

There are a number of requirements with regard to the provision of, or contribution towards off site improvements to infrastructure and services.

Replacement Council Depot and Household Waste Recycling Facility.

The existing Council depot site is identified for redevelopment in the Local Development Plan, and a site for a replacement is required within the M1 masterplan. Fig 24 shows the proposed location for this.



Fig 24 – Proposed layout of Park and Ride site.

In addition, the action plan notes that there is need for a household waste recycling facility and that a recycling bulking point could be included along with the Council Depot. The development framework states the following, however: -

A site for a recycling bulking point could be located at the Mintlaw Waste Treatment plant at Kirkhill, as this facility has recently become redundant. However, should the recycling bulking point require additional land take, land could be made available to the immediate east of site R1 (opposite site H1), unless a suitable alternative is agreed.

It is not therefore proposed that the bulking plant be planned for inclusion on the M1 site.

The Park and Ride area of the site is therefore broken down as indicated in fig 24. This makes logical use of land within the cordon sanitaire of the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Primary School

As mentioned in section 3, the primary school provision for Mintlaw requires improvement to accommodate the pupils generated from the village expansion. The Action Plan in section 3.3 identifies the requirements, but the development framework, approved by the Buchan Committee subsequently, and subject to significant community consultation, provides an update. The preferred solution is for a new school to be built in the centre of the village, next to the Academy, to accommodate 450 pupils. This would be partially funded by developer contributions from the zoned development sites, including M1.

However, there are two alternatives identified in the development framework, to ensure that there is a fall-back position. These are to provide a single new school on either site M1 or site H1, or to expand both the existing schools through developer contributions. In this respect, the masterplan identifies a suitable site for a primary school (fig 25), which can be offered as a serviced site should the preferred option prove undeliverable. This site could revert to an alternative land use should the school be sited elsewhere.



Fig 25 – Potential school site on site M1

Transportation

There are requirements identified in the transport assessment relating to road improvements to accommodate the traffic generated by the development. The principle works are the new roundabout on the A952, and improvements to the A952/Nether Aden Road junction. The Transport Assessment is included as an appendix in section 6, but will be updated as necessary to support an application for planning permission in principle for the site.

In addition to the local improvements, there is an ongoing requirement to make alterations to the centre of Mintlaw, where the A950 and A952 cross via a large roundabout. There is parking directly off the roundabout, and this can be hazardous, as cars reverse back onto the carriageway. It is accepted that developer contributions will be made from the development of sites M1 and EH3 towards delivering these improvements, which will be led by Aberdeenshire Council.

Water Supply

There are potential improvements required to the water supply and network infrastructure, and these will become clear through the planning permission in principle application process. Given the phased nature of development, this may also be addressed in a phased manner.

Waste Water Drainage

Waste water will be disposed of to the existing Waste Water Treatment Plant to the southeast of the development site. Access to the plant is straightforward, but capacity constraints are to be addressed by Scottish Water through a growth project, which is now underway, and expected to be complete by the end of 2017.

Health Care

There is a requirement for improved health care facilities to accommodate the additional population, but these will be addressed off-site through developer contributions, and through NHS funding.

4.9 Streets

Designing Streets came into force as a policy document in 2010, and seeks to alter the way streets are designed and used, prioritising pedestrians and cyclists and reducing traffic speeds. For decades, streets were designed around the motor car, with sweeping bends, forward visibility for drivers, segregated footpaths and cycle routes. More recently this approach has been mitigated by introducing traffic calming measures like speed humps. As a result of this, the established norm for housing layouts was to set houses back from the edge of the pavement, and provide front gardens and driveways for off street parking, thereby separating the private and public domains and moving away from a traditional sense of place. Rather, streets were simply a means to access private and segregated house plots.

Designing Streets seeks to reverse this trend, by bringing the design of a ‘place for people’ rather than cars, back to the fore. The following diagram from designing streets explains this change effectively.

Fig 26 shows the differences between segregated street patterns that we have been used to in recent decades, and the new approach of combined use of shared surfaces. The more informal the street layout becomes, the more it favours the movement, safety and enjoyment of pedestrians and cyclists, naturally slows vehicular traffic, and creates a more attractive place. The use of on street parking is also an important element of this because it allows house positions in relation to the street to vary, thereby creating more enclosed spaces, and removing the boundary between the private and public domains. The plot sizes remain almost identical, but the private space is located to the rear of the property.

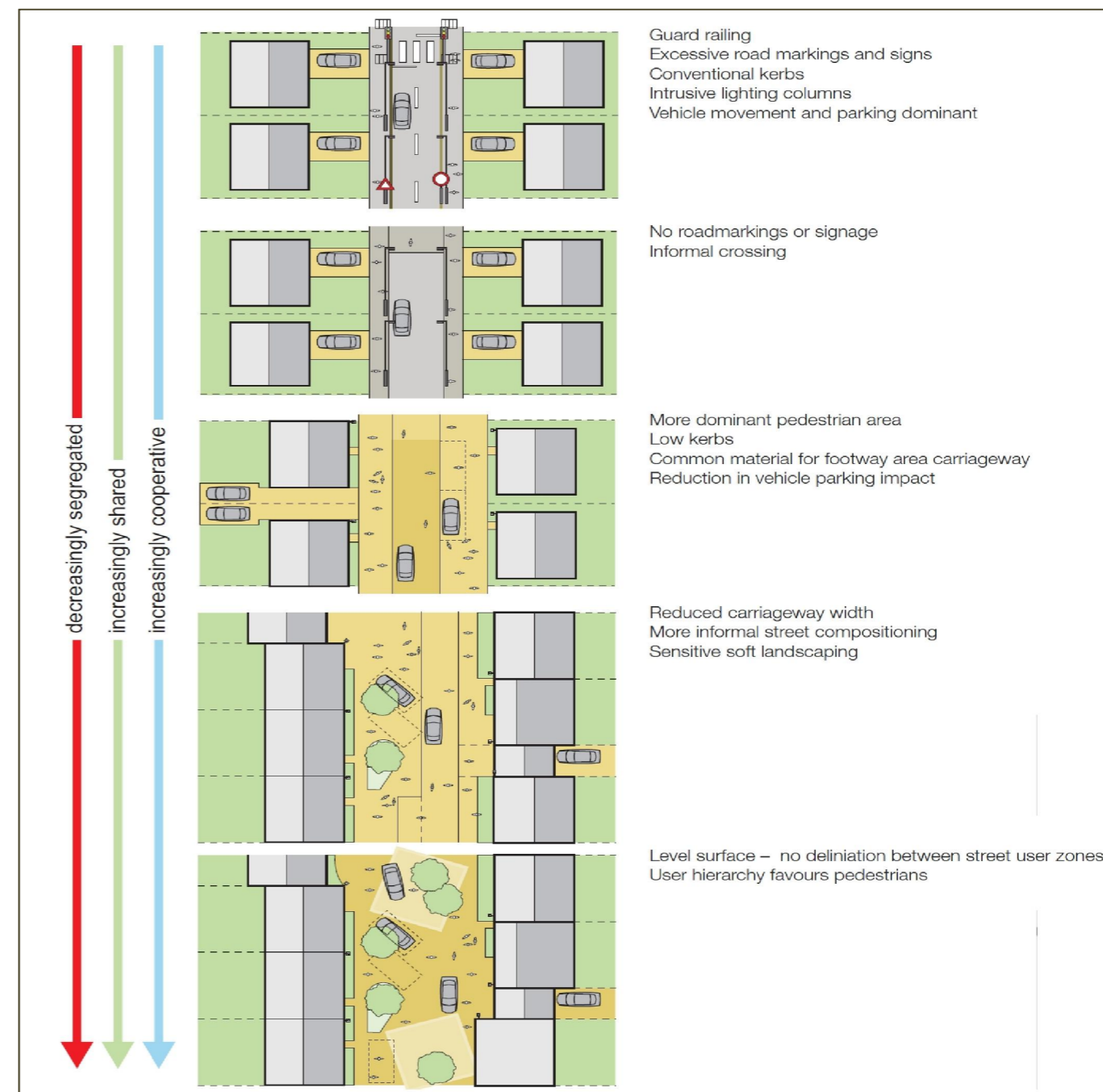


Fig 26 – the evolution to Designing Streets

One of the issues that must be faced, however, is the established norm of off street parking, and the privacy that residents have become accustomed to. There needs to be a mix of layouts with some homes and streets providing off street parking and front garden spaces in order to ensure the marketability of development. This requirement is particularly acute in a place like Mintlaw, where marketability will be more challenging than in other locations, due simply to the location of the village.

Within the masterplan therefore, it is proposed that the third and fourth examples from the top of Fig 26 be adopted as the principles of design. It may also be sensible to have some properties with front gardens and private off street parking, but with a more pedestrian friendly street layout to soften the transition from private to public realm.

Below are some typical cross sections of how the street design would be addressed in various parts of the site.



The first section is shown in Fig 27 below, and identified on the masterplan excerpt on the left. Between two rows of terraced houses, the street is characterised with a central green space planted with trees. Either side of the green space are shared pedestrian, cycle and vehicle carriageways, with parking catered for on street in front of properties, or in areas cut out from the green space. The houses themselves will be positioned very close to the back of the carriageway.



Fig 27 – Indicative section 1

Fig 28 shows an impression of how this may look from above, with this principle north to south route through the residential area developed with an emphasis on the green space in the centre, with informal on street parking dictated by the terraced properties being located close to the edge of the carriageway. Streets running east to west off this are arranged in a more typical style with front and

rear garden areas, and yet the provision of smaller than normal front gardens and on street parking availability will bridge the gap between public and private realm.



Fig 28 – Aerial impression of how the street design will be arranged.

The second section considers the commercial/retail centre of the development (located as shown on the right), and how this will look with flats above shops, larger buildings and a greater sense of enclosure to the street scene. Again, planting of trees within the carriageway will help to calm traffic, but in a narrower overall street width these are not part of a green spine as in example 1, but rather more randomly placed trees and other street furniture to reduce traffic speeds and make the public realm safer and more enjoyable for pedestrians.



Fig 29 shows that the higher buildings will create a sense of containment to the main street, in which planting and material choices will control traffic speeds and prioritise pedestrians. Shops and commercial uses on the ground floors are paired with flats above, with parking provided to the rear of

properties. The site offers a great opportunity to hide the parking areas from public view, because the mature tree belts between fields will be bolstered to provide visual landscape buffers.



Fig 29 – Indicative section 2, through the commercial/retail core.

4.10 Building Design

As suggested in the sections above, a modern clean look, coupled with traditional proportions is promoted for the buildings in the development. The use of a limited palette of finishing materials consistent throughout the site is important to ensuring the development is attractive. It is proposed that this will be agreed as part of a design guide to be produced for the application for planning permission in principle, and thereafter adhered to throughout the development. The sections indicate the use of white renders and horizontal cladding, which is both sustainable, and reflects the local character.

4.11 Ecology/Biodiversity

An ecological survey has been carried out on the site as part of the design process. This identifies much of the site simply as arable farmland, with any ecological and biodiversity value limited to the tree belts and a handful of other features. The Phase 1 habitat map is shown overleaf in Fig 30.

The full report is included in section 6, appendices, but the conclusions and recommendations are as follows: -

The improved pastures and arable land which dominated the study area are of very low ecological interest and there are unlikely to be any implications for habitat diversity arising from the development proposals within these fields.

In contrast, the network of old field boundaries comprising old walls, banks, ditches and mature plantings, provide linear habitats of more ecological interest, both for their varied plant associations, (comprising unimproved dry grasslands, tall herb and marsh communities) and for their function as key corridors in a broader landscape habitat network. These communities are of significant value at the site level and the old walled boundary network provides an attractive landscape feature.



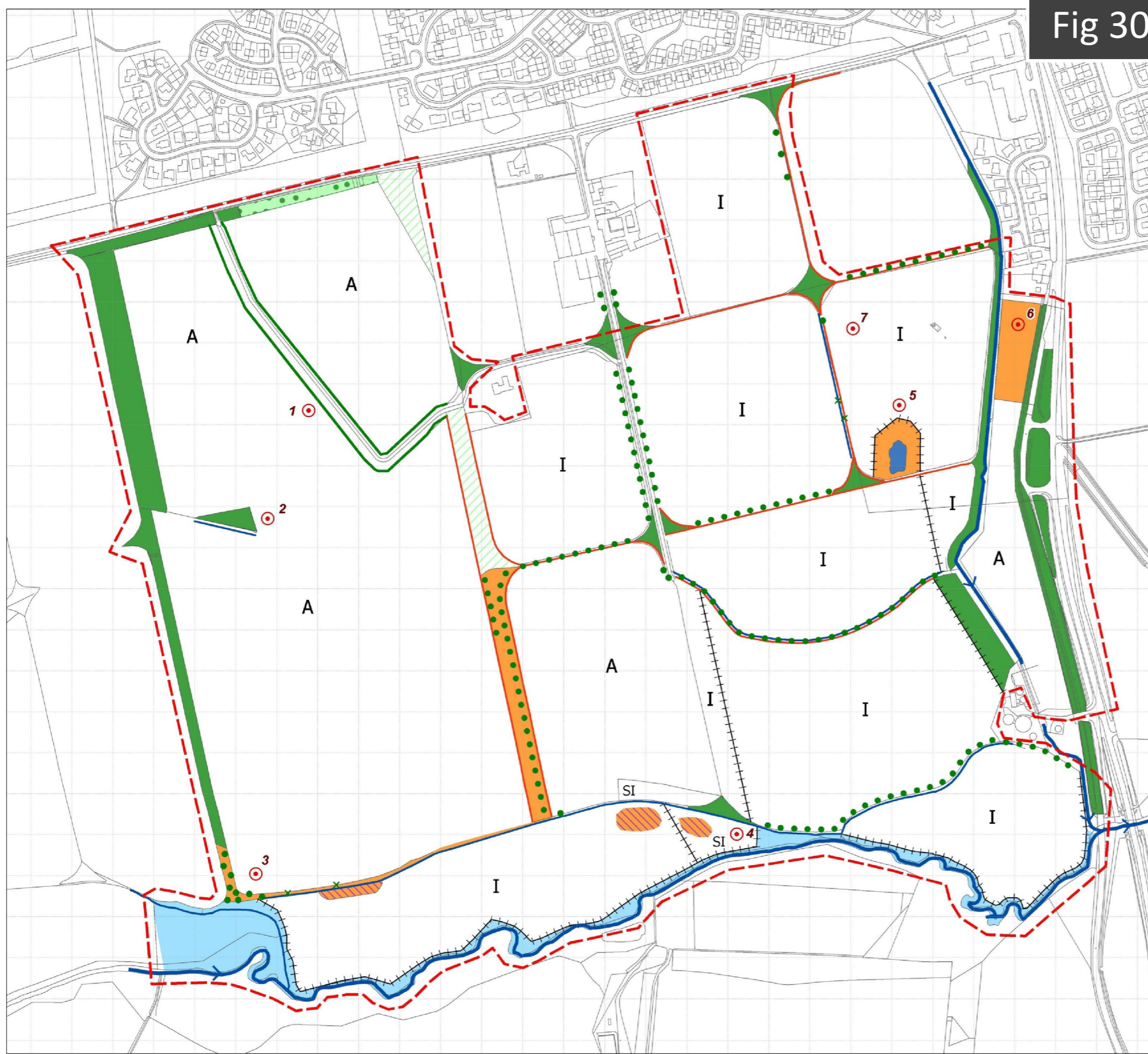
Mature trees and stone walls mark field boundaries (southern edge of the ‘Serpent Field’)

The development proposals will retain the basic pattern of old field boundaries and shelterbelts though locally, internal access roads will result in small sections of severance and consequently minimal habitat loss. The effects of this will be minimised by the retention of mature trees adjacent to the new openings in the boundary with re-enforcement planting of new trees where necessary. This will serve to reduce gaps in the tree canopy and retain the continuity of foraging lines for bats. Opportunities should be sought during detailed design to minimise the number of points of severance of the old field boundaries. Where mature trees need to be removed for construction, these should be subject to a detailed inspection for any cavities that could harbour nesting birds or roosting bats.

There is scope for the diversification of the existing closed stands of dense conifer planting by thinning and re-planting with native Scots pine and deciduous species. Numerous specimen trees from the existing stock should, however, be retained for the continuity of tree cover and for their value to certain bird species and red squirrels for food and cover.

The more southerly fields that slope towards the river floodplain and the floodplain itself are also excluded from the development. Thus the more ecologically valuable habitats in the south of the development area will be conserved and the development proposals should have no effect on dependent species of the river flood plain such as otter and water vole, if present.

Fig 30 – Phase 1 Habitat Map



- Legend**
- Study area boundary
 - Phase 1 habitat**
 - Deciduous woodland
 - Coniferous plantation
 - Mixed woodland
 - Unimproved neutral grassland
 - Marshy grassland
 - Standing water
 - Reed swamp
 - I Improved pasture
 - SI Poor semi-improved grassland
 - A Arable
 - Running water
 - Ditch
 - Hedge
 - Tree line
 - Fence
 - Stone wall
 - x Scrub
 - Tree
 - 1 Target note and number

The retained fields between the flood plain and the proposed housing will effectively reduce any light pollution of the river corridor and its floodplain. Any effects on foraging Daubenton’s bats, a species averse to feeding in artificial light, will therefore be minimal. There is scope for habitat creation and enhancements within the retained land, including SUDS for the new development which will complement the habitats in the adjacent flood plain.

Conversion of the farmland landscape to an urban environment may have implications for farmland birds such as yellowhammer which rely on the mosaic of open habitats of field and hedgerow. Such species have shown an often steep national decline and are now included as priority species in the UK BAP. However, it is likely that the development may affect only one pair and this species remains quite common in north-east Scotland. Populations will persist in the south of the development area and new habitats within the development will be of benefit to other bird species, albeit of a different community type to that of farmland landscapes.

The key recommendations in respect of ecology are therefore:

- Minimise severance of the old walled field boundaries during the detailed design phase.
- Ensure retention of adjacent mature trees to reduce the severance effects of new internal roads.
- Plant new trees as necessary for future contiguity of the canopy along old field boundaries.
- Use native tree and shrub species in new plantings.
- Thin and diversify the Norway spruce and Sitka spruce shelterbelts with new Scots pine and deciduous plantings while retaining a number of well spaced mature spruces.
- Repeat surveys for badger and red squirrel prior to any construction or landscaping works. Early spring is the optimum season for such surveys.
- Ensure any mature trees for removal are inspected for bat and nesting bird habitat.
- Should any works be undertaken in the river flood plain, a repeat survey for water vole and otter should be completed prior to the works, preferably in early spring before the full growth of vegetation.

With the adoption of the current proposal plans in respect of landscaping, the retention of the existing field boundaries and river flood-plain habitats, and the implementation of the above recommendations, it is anticipated that no significant ecological impacts should arise as a result of the proposed development.

4.12 Education/Routes to Schools

Covered in part in earlier sections of this report, education and routes to schools is relatively straightforward to address. This is largely due to the compact nature of the village, the central location of the existing secondary school, and the preferred location of a new primary school to serve the village.

The aerial photograph below shows the location of the secondary school, existing primary schools and indicative location for a new primary school in relation to the development site, and the routes available to walk or cycle to the site. The plan also shows the most convenient vehicular access to the schools, highlighting the fact that it is, and is likely to remain, more convenient to walk or cycle. This is an advantage that must be enhanced through the provision of and maintenance of safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists from all parts of the development.



Fig 31 – routes to school – pedestrian/cycle (white) and vehicular (blue)

To put the difference between the walking/cycling distance and the distance by car into perspective, the distance from the target on Fig 31 to the Academy or Pitfour Primary is 800m, or a 10 minute walk, with a single road crossing at Nether Aden Road. To make the journey by car would be a 2.3km drive, including one signalised junction and a roundabout. This is in a village that measures 1.5km from east to west.

Fig 31 also identifies the need to traffic calm Nether Aden Road to ensure safe crossing for children. There is an existing remote footpath in the woodland belt to the north of this road, which provides access to schools, Aden Country Park and the village centre, and in order to reduce unnecessary additional paths and/or road widening on Nether Aden Road, the best solution is to ensure safe and convenient access to it. The detailed consideration of safe crossing will be as part of an application for Planning Permission in Principle.

4.13 Commercial/Community Facilities

At this stage of the development process it is not easy to predict the market demand for commercial and retail premises, and as such there needs to be a degree of flexibility built into the design. As mentioned in section 3.6, the commercial centre of the site is identified as phase 6, towards the end of the development. However, it is also possible to bring the development of phase 6 forward to follow phase 2b, with access from the east, if the demand for commercial premises emerges quickly.

One of the benefits of designing the commercial core with flats above retail and commercial units is that there remains a flexibility on the use of the ground floor. These can be promoted as separate units from the flats, as integrated live/work properties, or should demand for commercial space not materialise, become residential on the ground floor, thereby avoiding empty properties or undeveloped sites within the development.

It is proposed that the detailed provision for retail and commercial space be dealt with at the detailed planning stage, when the demand and marketability of premises is better known.

4.14 Sustainability

Bancon are committed to achieving the most sustainable development possible. The development of this site is phased over a relatively long term, and the phased changes to the Building Standards (introducing the requirement for housing to be net zero carbon) will dictate that the later phases of this site will need to be of that standard. It is important to consider at the outset the measures that will be required to make such a target deliverable.

The use of district heating to provide heat and hot water to houses has been successful in Banchory, and enabled the delivery of housing that substantially outperforms the Building Standards requirements for sustainability and efficiency. Although Mintlaw will probably be developed over a longer timetable, the use of district heating will be explored further, with the use of biomass fuel.

The use of timber framed construction for buildings will also be utilised, adopting a fabric first approach to reducing the energy consumption of houses as a priority. Regulations require the use of low and zero carbon generating technologies to provide heat and/or power to new homes, and the use of biomass district heating will contribute towards this, allowing the emphasis on individual buildings to shift towards reducing their energy consumption.

5 Community and Engagement

Since the outset of the design process for site M1, there has been a comprehensive process of consultation with the local community. The process dates back to September 2008.

- Presentation to Mintlaw Community Council - 18th September 2008
- Submission of Local Development Plan Bid - November 6th 2008
- Presentation to Deer Community Council - 13th November 2008
- Drop-in Exhibition - Mintlaw - 7th March 2009
- Public Meeting - Mintlaw - 18th March 2009
- Presentation to Mintlaw Community Council - 21st May 2009
- Further public meeting held on proposed short term application for business park - 4th May 2010
- Public presentation on the Development Framework – 1st September 2011

Reports on each of these events are included as appendices.

Two Major Applications meetings have been held with Aberdeenshire Council and several stakeholders in order to glean a detailed understanding of the site and the requirements of the masterplan. The feedback from these two valuable meetings has also been incorporated into the masterplanning process.

6 Appendices

- A) Development Framework
- B) Transport Assessment
- C) Engineering Report
- D) Drainage Impact Assessment
- E) Flood Risk Assessment
- F) Environmental Risk Assessment
- G) Ecological Assessment
- H) Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- I) Tree Survey
- J) Report of Public Consultation to date