

Lochside of Leys Masterplan Sites OP2 and OP3



November 2019

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1 Vision



View of Scolty Hill looking South across the masterplan area

1 Vision

A masterplan for Lochside of Leys was granted by Aberdeenshire Council in 2015, and subsequently Planning Permission in Principle was granted in 2017. An MSC application for the first phase of development (56 houses) was granted in September 2018, and work has commenced, with the first units occupied in August 2019.

A number of changes have occurred in the time since the masterplan was granted by Aberdeenshire Council, and as such it was deemed appropriate to prepare this revised masterplan report to inform development going forwards.

Key changes from the masterplan approved in 2015: -

- 1) A full distributor road from the A93 to Raemoir Road and further West is no longer necessary, as there is no longer an ambition to by-pass Banchory with such a road through the Lochside of Leys development.
- 2) The Flood Risk Assessment for the Eastern half of the site has been revisited in more detail, in response to conditions in the Planning Permission in Principle.
- 3) Consideration has been given to the integration of potential future housing land being considered as part of the 2021 Local Development Plan process (albeit not part of this masterplan)
- 4) The Transport Assessment work has been revisited following the further development of the Oaklands site in Hill of Banchory.

The land in question is relatively flat, and is largely in agricultural use. There are significant areas of high biodiversity value and wildlife habitats, including the Loch of Leys Local Nature Conservations Site, which splits the area in two. These must be protected, and enhanced where possible, as part of the development of the area. There are also areas of mature woodland which provide a distinctive character. The development of the land must therefore be done as sensitively as possible, to maintain the distinct character of Banchory. Enhanced access to the countryside and woodlands around the site will be of great benefit to the existing and newly accommodated population.

The development of Banchory over the last 40 years has accelerated, with the development of Hill of Banchory contributing to a rise in the population from 6,034 in 2001 to in excess of 8,000 in 2019. Through the development of Hill of Banchory, a principal aim has been to provide a suitable land use mix, with more than just housing, to alter the trend of Banchory growing as a commuter town serving Aberdeen. It has taken some time, but the potential of the business land to the north of the Hill of Banchory is now being realised. Hill of Banchory now offers a state of the art sports centre with swimming pool, as well as new retail outlets. Further retail and commercial development is anticipated at Oaklands and to the North of Tesco in due course.

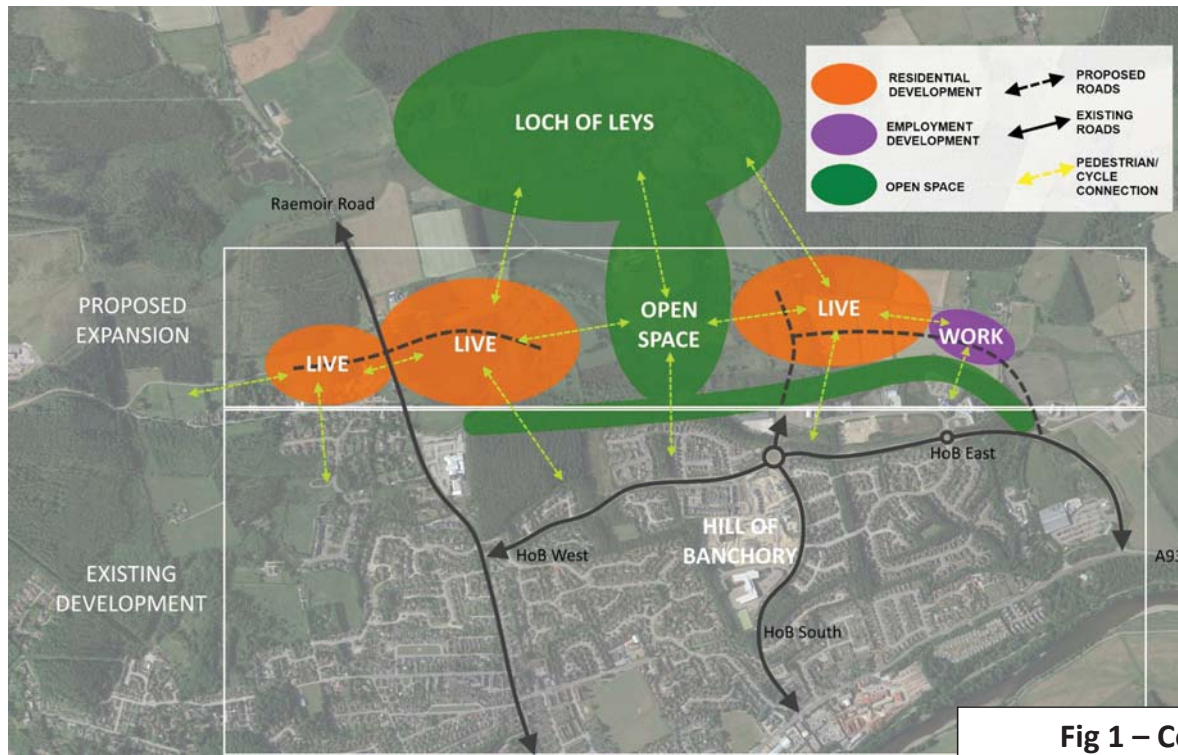
It is therefore imperative to ensure that an appropriate mix of land uses continues to be provided in Banchory to create a long term sustainable future for the town.

In summary therefore, the following key factors underpin our vision for the development of North Banchory, and will be considered throughout the masterplanning process: -

- Biodiversity and landscape character must be protected and enhanced as the town expands to the north, with the Local Nature Conservation Site afforded particular protection and enhancement.
- Appropriate employment and commercial opportunities must be delivered in the right locations to continue the shift from commuter town to a more sustainable community.
- A consistent growth rate is important to address demand for housing and ensure education facilities in particular do not become stretched.
- A continuation of the success of Hill of Banchory in minimising the reliance on private car use, through excellent pedestrian and cycle facilities, and accessible public transport.
- Implement the principles of Designing Places and Designing Streets to create a genuine sense of place.

Considering all these points, the concept or 'vision' plan for the site shown in fig 1 has evolved.

This report will provide a clear plan for the northern expansion of Banchory for the next decade, and will provide a guide for the creation of a more sustainable, enjoyable and attractive place to live, work and play.



2 Context



Loch of Leys

2 Context

The Strategic Development Plan

The strategic arm of the development plan for the Aberdeen City Region is the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan, which was adopted on 28th March 2014. This plan is currently under review, and a replacement SDP is expected to be adopted in 2020.

The Strategic Development Plan is an expansive, visionary document which encourages both economic and population expansion in the North East in the period 2011 to 2035. The Spatial Strategy in the Plan highlights that this growth is envisaged to take place in three Strategic Growth Areas: -

1. In the transport corridor from Laurencekirk to Huntly.
2. In the Aberdeen to Peterhead transport corridor, and
3. In the City of Aberdeen.

Overall, the Plan anticipates there is a requirement for 67,500 new homes to be built across The City and Shire to facilitate this economic and population growth. Aberdeenshire is required to accommodate 36,000 houses, and the land required is to be identified through the Local Development Plan Review.

Although Banchory falls outwith the three strategic growth areas, the Strategic Development Plan still identifies a necessity for growth. Paragraph 3.43 states: -

“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.”

Indeed, the Strategic Development Plan requires the Local Development Plan to identify sites for 3,700 houses in the Local Growth and Diversification Areas in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area, with 2,350 of these by 2026. Banchory falls within this area, along with a number of other settlements, including Kemnay, Westhill, Oldmeldrum and Newmachar. However, Banchory is arguably the best placed and best served of these settlements to accommodate further growth. This conclusion is on the basis of a combination of school capacity, drainage and water supply availability, other services, transport and accessibility, strength of market, existing district heating provision and climate. Other settlements in the area require considerable infrastructure investment to accommodate further significant growth.

The plan is not however one-dimensional, and as well as this emphasis on growth, there is also an emphasis on addressing climate change, as well as environmental, and sustainability issues.

On climate change, the objective is to ‘be a City Region which takes the lead in reducing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the air, adapts to the effects of climate change, and limits the non-renewable resources it uses’. To achieve this objective, the plan sets targets for minimising energy requirements, saving water, developing renewable electricity, as well as flooding and waste avoidance.

On environmental quality, the objective is ‘to make sure new development maintains and improves the region’s important built, natural and cultural assets’. Development management should ensure that new developments are required to meet this target. A Green Belt Review is also an essential element of this objective.

A further objective of the Strategic Development Plan is to develop sustainable mixed communities which meet the needs of the whole community, both now and in the future, and make the area a more attractive place for residents and business to move to. To achieve this objective, targets are set for: regeneration, the use of brownfield land, high density, high quality design, and mixed use.

In summary, the Strategic Development Plan encourages growth, but not at any price. New developments require to be sustainable, well designed, and attractive, **as well as conforming to an overall masterplan.**

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2012

The 2012 Local Development Plan identified Banchory as a suitable settlement for continued expansion in the Local Growth and Diversification Area identified in the Structure Plan. The area for expansion is identified to the north and east of the town, and is shown in fig 2 below. The original masterplan was based upon this allocation.

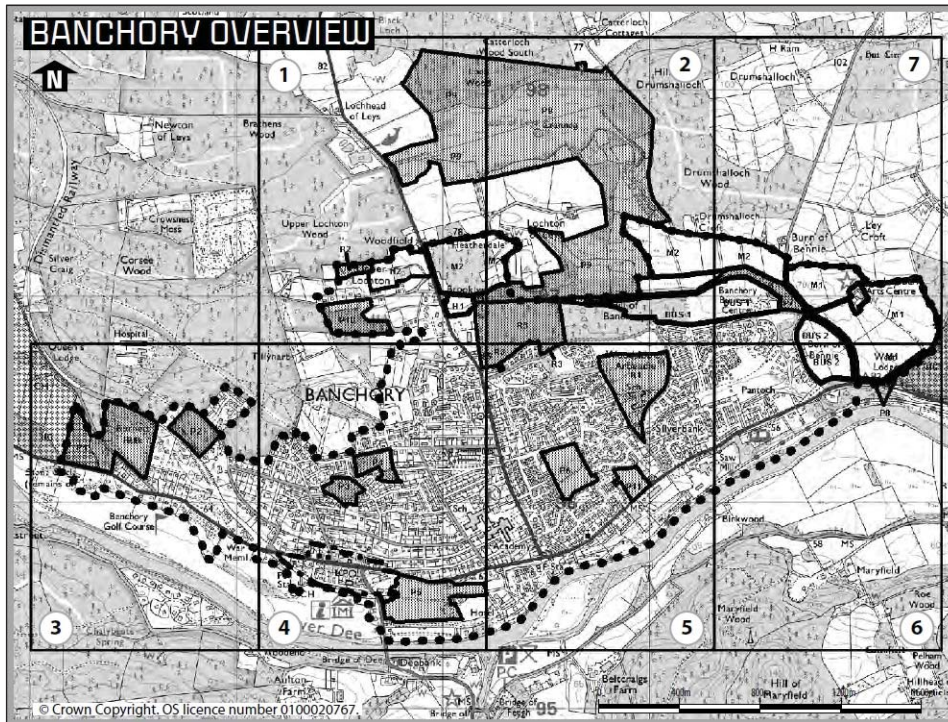


Fig 2 – 2012 Local Development Plan proposals map for Banchory

The 2012 Local Development Plan supplementary guidance for Banchory identified requirements for settlement infrastructure, and specified that: -

- All development in the settlement will require to contribute to the provision of a new medical centre, and education provision.
- Open space provision should include a full size pitch, and small sided pitch, woodland park, landscape and recreational network of at least 10ha, allotments and additional play areas. Land for a sports centre, swimming pool and all weather pitch is required.

- A new distributor road between the A980 (Raemoir Road) and the A93 with full connectivity is required. The impact of development on junctions along the A93 should be assessed with possible upgrades at the A93 Station Road and B974 Dee Street junction. A park and ride site is required.

Potential reinforcement of the water and drainage infrastructure is also identified, along with the requirement for affordable housing in the town.

The relevant development allocations were identified as follows: -

- Site H2 is allocated for up to 50 houses in the second phase and will be subject to a masterplan.
- Site M2 is allocated for a mix of uses to include 345 houses and 2ha of business land with 135 houses in the first phase and 210 houses in the second phase. This includes 135 houses from site R3 which was in the previous local plan for housing and allows site R3 to be reserved for new educational uses. Proposals on site M2 should protect the Loch of Leys Local Nature Conservation Area. A masterplan is required for the site.

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017

The Local Development Plan was replaced in 2017 with a new plan, which again carried forward the allocations listed above for Banchory. Fundamentally the proposals for Banchory did not change, although recognition of the approved masterplan is noted. The 2017 Plan no longer identifies the need for a distributor road link from the A93 to Raemoir Road. The 2017 Local Development Plan settlement map for Banchory is shown below in fig 3.

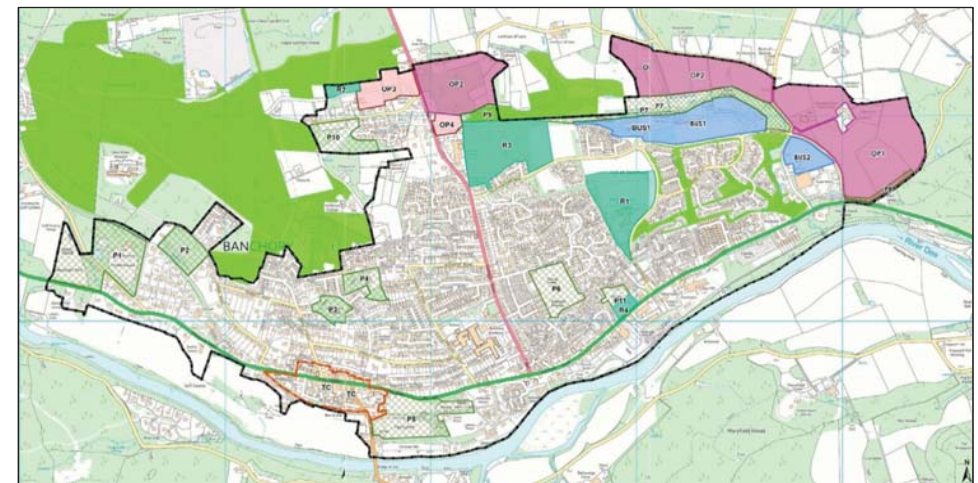


Fig 3 - 2017 Local Development Plan proposals map for Banchory

The allocation of the masterplan sites was continued from the 2012 Plan, now identified as OP2 and OP3 for 345 and 50 houses respectively. The allocations specify the following requirements: -

- These sites were previously allocated as sites M2 and H2 in the 2012 LDP and it is expected that they will be taken forward together. A masterplan for these sites was approved by the Marr Area Committee on 10 March 2015. Future development proposals should have regard to the principles set out in that document.
- Woodland loss (ancient woodland) should be minimised. A species survey and mitigation plan should accompany the planning application. In accordance with the Scottish Government Control of Woodland Removal Policy, compensatory tree planting will be required.
- A core path is located in close proximity to the site and suitable connections to it should be made through the site layout.
- A drainage impact assessment will be required with a new pumping station or upgrade to existing station required. Demand for water and waste water capacity for the non-domestic element of this development will depend on the business uses proposed. Early engagement with Scottish Water is encouraged. A flood risk assessment may be required.
- It is expected that 98 affordable homes will be provided onsite by the developer, integrated into the design of the development which should include a range of detached and semi-detached houses as well as flats.

Emerging 2021 Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan review is currently ongoing, and the new plan is expected to be adopted in 2021. This will be a plan for 10 years, rather than the 5 years of the current plan. The Plan is at the ‘Main Issues Report’ stage.

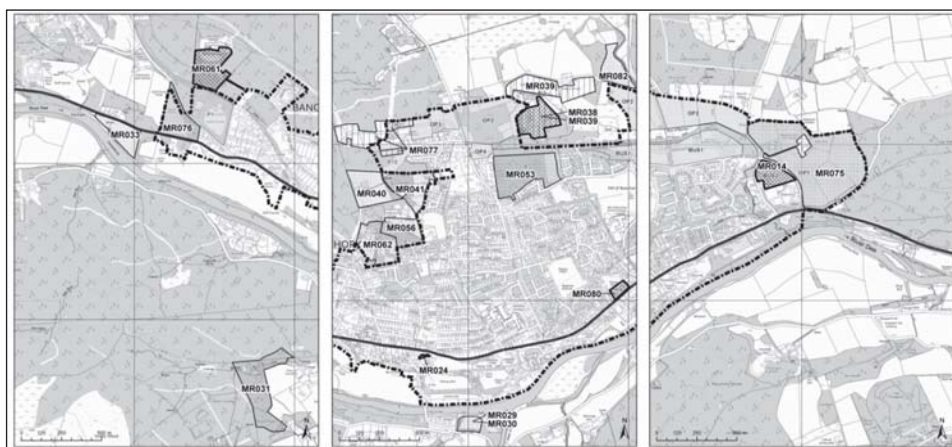


Fig 4 - Main Issues Report Settlement Plan 2019.

Site MR038 is identified in the Proposed Local Development Plan as an allocation for 100 houses for the 2021-2030 plan period, and sites MR039 and MR077 identified in the Main Issues Report as reserved sites for 100 and 40 houses respectively to be considered for future development.

These sites do not form part of this masterplan but have been noted because they are included in the associated Transport Assessment, carried out to demonstrate that the access strategy is sufficiently ‘future-proofed’ to accommodate possible future development sites.

Aberdeenshire Parks and Open Space Strategy

The Parks and Open Space Strategy was published in 2011, and sets out the following vision for Aberdeenshire: -

“provide high quality multi-functional open space that is easily accessible, safe, welcoming, rich in biodiversity and sustainably managed for the future; which encourages a sense of belonging, and enhances the quality of life of those people who live, work in and visit Aberdeenshire”

The strategy seeks to implement a function led approach to the identification and delivery of open space, and requires 40% of major development sites to be open space. Within the settlement boundary, over 50% of the land in Banchory is already open space. This is one of the highest percentages in Aberdeenshire.

Four underlying principles to a holistic approach to the provision of open space are also identified in the strategy document: -

- lowest possible maintenance
- community volunteering
- the proximity principle
- connectivity

The strategy thereafter sets out a clear hierarchy of open space, and specific requirements for different scales of development.

Action Programme

In support of the Local Development Plan, an Action Programme has been developed that identifies key actions and requirements to ensure the delivery of development proposals. The table of requirements and actions for Banchory is shown below.

The relevant matters identified in the Action Programme have been addressed through the Planning Permission in Principle application, and appropriate contributions secured through the associated Section 75 Agreement.

BANCHORY			Aberdeen HMA Local Growth
INFRASTRUCTURE			
SECTORS	RESPONSIBLE	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE / NOTES
Education (Primary)	E	Developers should seek to engage with the Council for proposals of 3 homes or more to establish capacity of Hill of Banchory Primary School.	
Education (Secondary)	D	Developers should seek to engage with the Council for proposals of 10 homes or more to establish capacity of Banchory Academy.	
Healthcare	NHS	Development in Banchory will require to contribute towards a new health centre in Banchory.	Project identified in NHS asset management plan.
Local Transportation Infrastructure	D	Assessment required to determine impact on junctions along A93.	
Local Transportation Infrastructure	T	Progress with delivery of park and ride. Design brief being finalised and work on submission of a planning application underway.	
Waste Water (Banchory WWTW)	D	Wastewater network investigations required to establish whether local network upgrades may be required.	
Waste Water (Banchory WWTW)	SW	A growth project has been initiated at Banchory WWTW.	Likely delivery is 2022-2023.
Water (Invercarnie WTW)	D	Network upgrades including growth project may be required to facilitate further development. The developer may be required to carry out a Water Impact Assessment to assess the impact of their development and ensure there is no detrimental impact on existing customers.	Undergoing growth with planned investment within 2015 – 2021 period.

Fig 5 – Action Programme excerpt

Affordable Housing

Since the approval of the original masterplan, planning permission was also granted for development at Oaklands in Hill of Banchory, which accounted for an earlier overprovision of affordable housing within Hill of Banchory, and delivered another 42 affordable units, which contribute towards (by means of a joint Section 75 agreement) the overall affordable housing provision of the masterplan area and Oaklands combined. This therefore leaves 74 affordable unit to be delivered on the masterplan site.

With the Oaklands site complete, the trigger points for affordable housing delivery on the Lochside of Leys masterplan site are therefore: -

- 24 Affordable Units to be delivered before 124 Open Market Houses
- 48 Affordable Units to be delivered before 224 Open Market Houses
- 74 Affordable Units to be delivered before 299 Open market Houses

The Section 75 agreement identifies an indicative size and tenure mix for the affordable housing, although it is accepted that the requirement may change over time.



Development of Oaklands included 42 affordable homes, completed in 2019

3 Site Analysis and Appraisal



Site of proposed business land adjacent to phase 1b – Banchory Business Centre can be seen through the tree belt

3 Site Analysis and Appraisal

3.1 Climate

Banchory, like settlements along the length of the River Dee, is laid out on the northern side of the river, on a south facing slope. Protected from the prevailing winds by the Grampian Hills, the town has a pleasant overall climate, with low annual rainfall, higher than average days of sunshine, and temperatures comparable to lower coastal areas. Fig 6 shows a selection of average climate statistics from the Met Office archives, with Banchory identified with an X. It is clear that the River Dee valley has a more pleasant climate than surrounding areas.

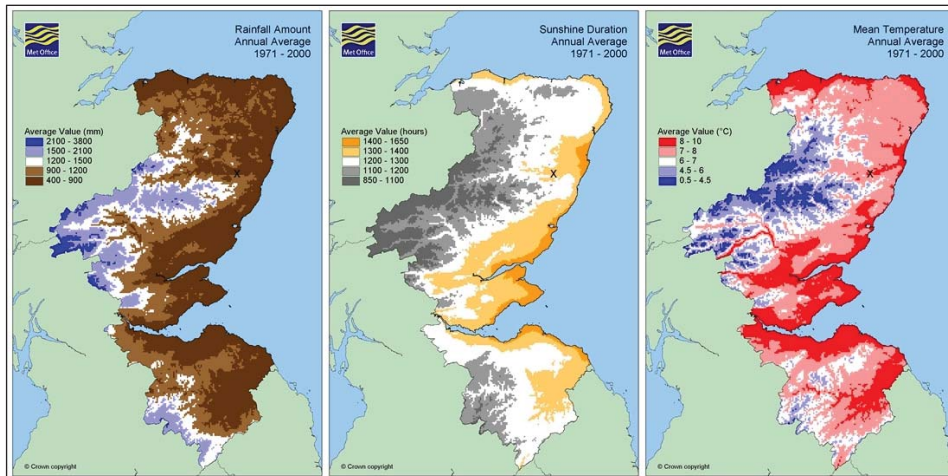


Fig 6 – Climate details for Banchory.

The masterplan area itself is located to the north of a ridge that runs through the Hill of Banchory, and therefore will benefit less from the south facing aspect of the existing town. However, the land is relatively flat, and still benefits from the protection of the Grampian Hills to the south and west. Fig 7 shows the town and the ridgeline, in relation to the Aberdeenshire Local Plan settlement map.

The plan shows that whilst the land falls very gently from the ridge towards the Loch of Leys, and to the east of the town, it then rises up again to the northwest and north east. The proposed expansion area may therefore contain localised frost pockets and areas with a degree of shading, but overall the area will enjoy the same pleasant climate as the existing town.



Fig 7 – Ridgeline running through Hill of Banchory.

3.2 Landscape Characteristics

Site Area

The masterplan area considered in this report is 81 hectares in area, but much of this will be open space and woodland. The proposed development areas consist of:

- Site OP3 - 3.9 hectares
- Site OP2 East - 15.4 hectares
- Site OP2 West - 9.5 hectares

Topography

As mentioned briefly above, most of the site is located to the north of the ridge that runs west to east to the north of the River Dee valley. From this ridge, the land falls gently towards the Loch of Leys. However, the eastern part of OP2 and most of site OP3 are south facing, with slightly higher land to the north and east of the town. Compared with much of the Hill of Banchory area, the land is fairly flat, and suitable for development in this regard.



Relatively flat land.

The gentle slopes do not, however, offer a great deal of screening, and additional peripheral planting, to bolster existing woodland and tree belts may be necessary.

Environment/Vegetation

The environment and vegetation is of vital importance to the area, particularly in and around the Local Nature Conservation Site. The Loch of Leys itself is an important wetland area, and any development, planting or landscaping in proximity to it must be carried out with great caution to prevent impacts and avoid restricting views of it.



Loch of Leys

Along the northern edge of the existing Hill of Banchory area, a belt of mature trees has been retained from the former commercial woodland. This is identified in the Local Development Plan as protected, and will provide a screen between the business land and the further expansion of housing to the North. This belt will provide a valuable sense of containment and scale for the development, a measure that has been successful in Hill of Banchory, where several similar tree belts have been retained.



Tree belt between existing business land and masterplan area.

The retained tree belts in the Hill of Banchory also provide an opportunity for locating foot and cycle routes in an attractive, safe and sheltered manner – an example of which is shown on the right. In addition to this, local children’s play areas have also been located in the woodland belts.

To the north and west of the masterplan area there are significant areas of commercial woodland that contribute to the broader setting of Banchory. Structural landscape planting is proposed as part of the masterplan to contain and screen development from wider views, and to ensure an appropriate transition between the town and the countryside beyond.

The aim of the masterplan is to therefore retain the important parts of woodland and wetland, and bolster the tree cover where appropriate, whilst sensitively fitting development into the remaining areas.



Boundaries

There is a great diversity of dry-stane dykes, native tree belts and hedges between fields. Where possible and practical, these will all be retained intact. The development must also respect these features, and utilise appropriate new boundary treatments to complement the established character of the area.

The Wider Landscape

The initial concept of development to the north of Banchory was submitted as a Local Development Plan bid, supported by a comprehensive Landscape Capacity Study carried out by David Wilson Associates. This report is appended to the masterplan in section 6.

To summarise the findings of that initial report, fig 8 below shows the assessment plan, with several constraint layers overlaid to show the most and least favourable areas for development.

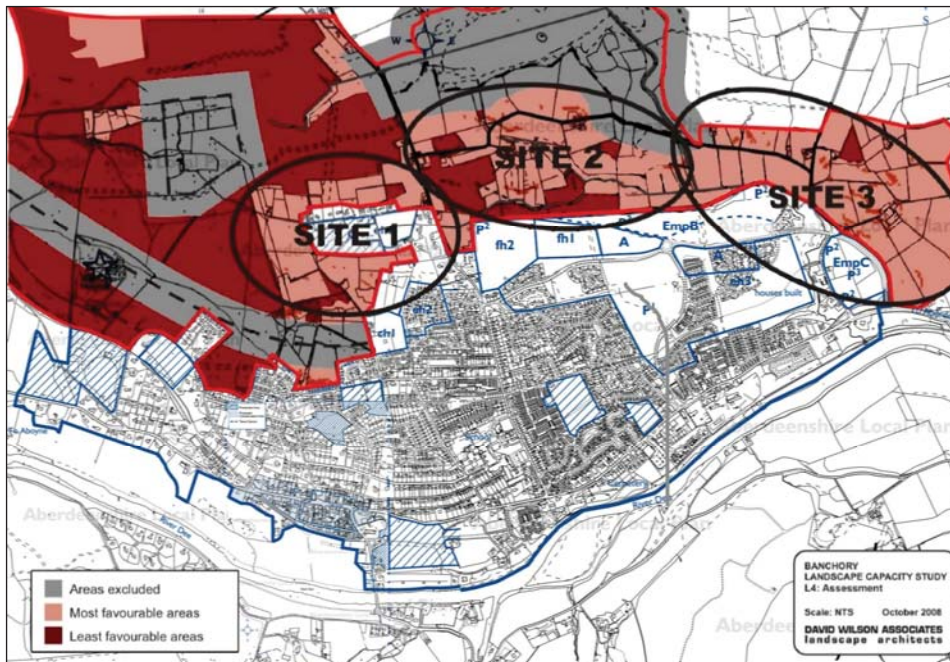


Fig 8 – Landscape Capacity Study summary plan.

3.3 Ecology

Ecological Appraisal

The Local Development Plan bid was supported by an ecological appraisal, but this has subsequently been revisited in more detail in June 2013. Fig 9 below shows the final analysis and ecological constraints.

The survey does not identify any constraints to the proposed development, and provides several recommendations that have been implemented in the masterplan, and which will be fed into the landscape design on a phase by phase basis. The report identifies the important ecological characteristics of the area in the centre of the site (the P9 site in the 2012 LDP), which is designated as a Local Nature Conservation Site. The full ecological report is appended to this masterplan report.

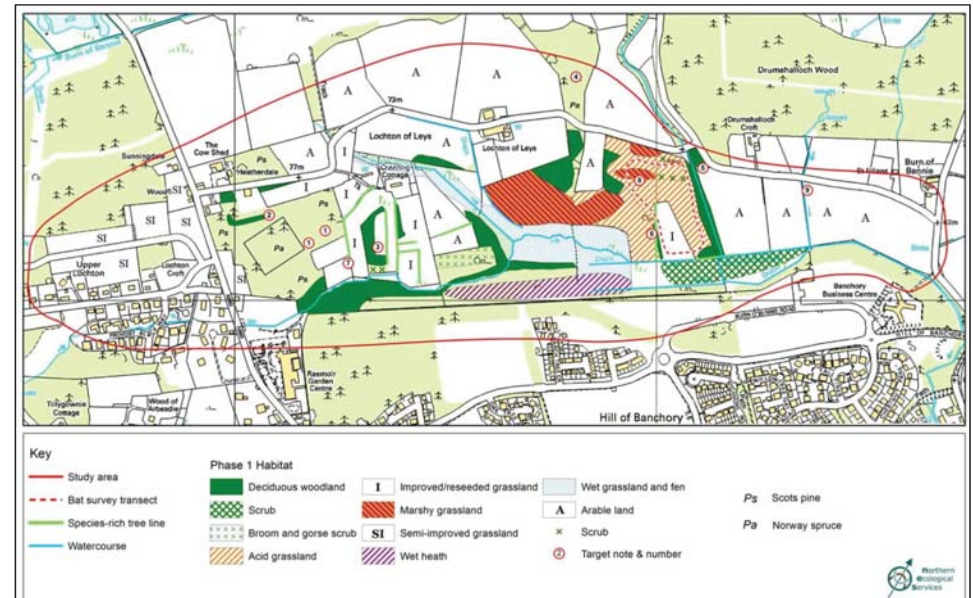


Fig 9 – Ecological Constraints.

Through the detailed application process for Phase 1a, further species studies were carried out and the presence of badgers resulted in a significant amendment to the layout of that phase. Studies for bats, otters, water voles and squirrels were also carried out. Further species surveys will be carried out on a phase by phase basis in order to ensure up-to-date information is informing the final layouts.

Nature Conservation Designations

As identified above, the area splitting site OP2 into two halves is identified as a Local Nature Conservation Site. This is a designation that replaces a number of previous local designations, under a single title. It provides a clear boundary for the most sensitive area, including the Loch of Leys and the wet grassland and heath. Looking at the site from an aerial photograph shows clearly the difference between the vegetation and character of the land within the protected area.



Fig 10 – Local Nature Conservation Site from the air.

This area offers the greatest value in terms of biodiversity and wildlife habitat, and its long term protection and enhancement is a key requirement of the masterplan. Development of the masterplan area must not impact negatively upon this area, and must not create any habitat fragmentation by cutting it off from the surrounding countryside.

A long term management plan for the LNCS was required by condition on the Planning Permission in Principle, and a report prepared in support of the detailed planning application for phase 1a.

3.4 Drainage and Water Supply

A detailed Drainage Impact Assessment has been carried out for the masterplan area, and a set of surface water and foul water drainage proposals have been developed to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the Local Nature Conservation Site. The typical measure of collecting surface water in detention basins and then discharging to a watercourse has been replaced, with basins discharging to filter trenches to ensure as similar an overall runoff into the wetland area as possible, rather than a small number of discharge points.

The existing watercourses, and means of disposal of foul water from the site are shown on fig 11 below.

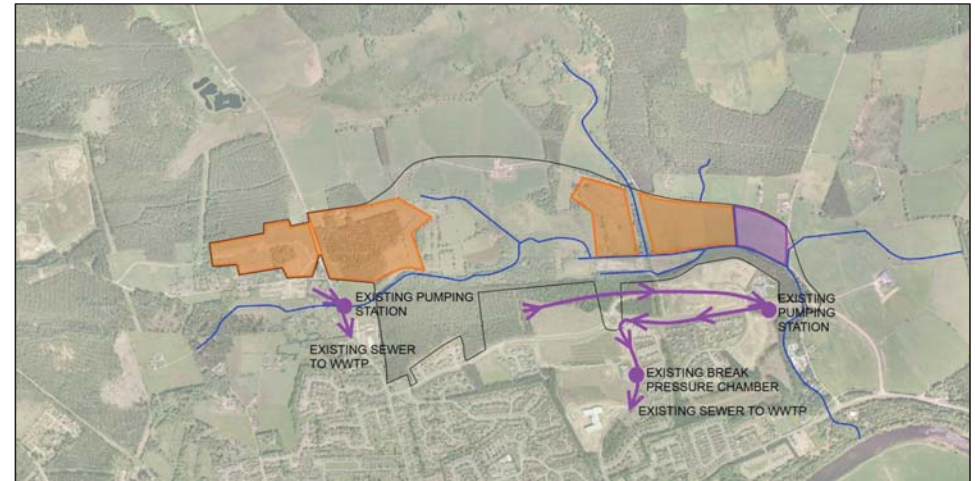


Fig 11 – Watercourses and current foul drainage

Watercourses are shown in blue and existing foul drainage infrastructure in purple. The plan demonstrates that the existing levels will allow the foul drainage to be collected to the south of the masterplan area, and pumped over the ridge to the existing network and the waste water treatment works. Scottish Water are currently in the process of delivering major upgrades to the waste water treatment works in Banchory, and appropriate capacity has been agreed to enable development to continue in the interim, until these works are complete.

There is sufficient capacity at the Invercarnie Water Treatment Works to serve the site, although some upgrade to the supply to Banchory is required. Again, these works are currently underway, and an interim water supply provision has been agreed with Scottish Water until these works are complete.

3.5 Flood Risk

The eastern part of the OP2 site is identified as at risk of flooding on SEPA's revised flood risk maps. The area is shown overleaf in Fig 12. The allocation of the land for development in the Local Development Plan specifies the potential requirement for a Flood Risk Assessment as part of the planning process.



Fig 12 – area of flood risk identified on the revised SEPA flood risk map.

A Flood Risk Assessment was carried out as part of the original masterplan work, and carried forward to the Planning Permission in Principle application. Whilst it was deemed acceptable in principle, conditions on the PPIP require further detailed assessment work to be carried out to support the Eastern parts of the development. This has been done in isolation for phase 1a, which is now under construction, and the modelling is now being expanded to cover the balance of phase 1. This will be submitted as part of a forthcoming MSC application for phase 1b.

3.6 Constraints

Aside from matters mentioned in more detail above, such as the landscape designations on the land and flood risk, there are few constraints on the site. There are a small number of existing properties on the site, which will remain as part of the development. There are instances where there may be the necessity to alter access to some of these properties, but it is envisaged that any changes will improve the current situation.

There are two overhead power lines running east to west through the site which will be re-routed underground as part of the development of the site. This work has commenced as part of the Phase 1a development.

3.7 Services

Roads

Through discussions about the best route for a distributor road required by the 2012 allocation of the Lochside of Leys site, and as explained in the introduction to this revised masterplan, it has been

established that a new distributor road is not necessarily required, subject to the delivery of a suitable access strategy for the whole site.

A revised strategy has therefore been developed, that significantly reduces the potential environmental impact of the development, and makes substantially better use of the existing road network. This is the principal amendment to the masterplan from the one approved in 2015.

This strategy is based upon the following criteria:

- Core Roads can accommodate development up to 300 units, where there are two points of connection to the distributor road network
- Core Roads can accommodate up to 100 houses where there is a single point of access to the distributor road network, plus a secondary emergency access.
- Core Roads can accommodate up to 50 units from a single point of access to the distributor road network.
- Cycle and pedestrian connectivity should be considered separately to the vehicular access strategy, and considered to be of high priority, to encourage a modal shift away from reliance on private car use.

The existing network of Distributor Roads is shown overleaf, and it is upon this existing network that the new strategy will be built.



Fig 13 – Existing 'distributor road' network

Pedestrian and Cycle

There are numerous foot and cycle paths around Banchory, as well as a network of paths identified in the Council's Core Path Plan. The development of the masterplan area must ensure enhancement and integration of the foot and cycle path network as a priority, to minimise reliance on private car use. This will be explored in some detail in section 4.7.

As part of the revision to the original masterplan, this issue has been given a sharper focus, to ensure that the resulting development is as well connected for pedestrians and cyclists as it can be, in order to provide the necessary infrastructure to influence a genuine modal shift away from reliance on motor vehicle trips.

Waste Disposal/Recycling

Additional waste recycling facilities have been delivered recently in Banchory, with contributions committed via the Section 75 agreement attached to the Planning Permission in Principle for the site.

Education and Facilities

A rezoning exercise has been carried out for primary schools in the town, ensuring that Lochside of Leys is predominantly zoned to Banchory Primary School, where there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the housing allocation. Recent adjustments to the school capacity at Banchory Academy, combined with the ability to redevelop the swimming pool due to the completion of Banchory Sports Village has resulted in sufficient capacity to accommodate the masterplan area. Contributions towards primary school capacity for early phases of development at Hill of Banchory Primary School are secured by means of the Section 75 Agreement associated with the Planning Permission in Principle.

Banchory has a high street offering a good mix of shops and professional services. Outwith the town centre, convenience shopping is available at Morrisons superstore. More recently, a Tesco store has been developed on the eastern edge of the town. There is also a small newsagents at Tillybrake. Most recently, the Oaklands development included the delivery of a Co-Op convenience store, which serves a substantial walking catchment that includes the Lochside of Leys area.

Similarly, the opening of Banchory Sports Village has provided a modern leisure facility in the heart of Hill of Banchory, and within an easy walking/cycling distance of the masterplan area.

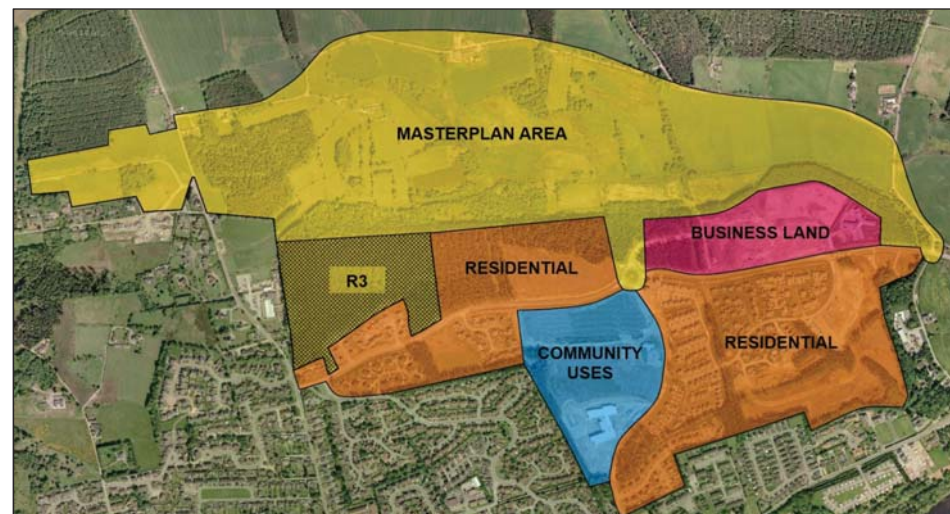


Fig 14 – Land uses in Hill of Banchory area.

Considering the community uses area in more detail, the aerial photograph overleaf (fig 15) shows the Oaklands site in December last year, with the Sports Village nearing completion and the Co-Op under construction. This part of the site will be central to, and easily accessible to the whole of Hill of Banchory, and also provide convenient facilities for much of the masterplan area.

The further development of this site has been considered in the context of this masterplan for further expansion – not least because it will serve much of it. Similarly, the location of the remaining business land is a consideration in this masterplanning process.



Fig 15 – Community Uses site in Hill of Banchory. Photo from December 2018 – both the Sports Village and the Co-Op are now open.

Electricity/Gas/District Heating

The site is readily served by electricity, with additional capacity having been built in when network reinforcement was carried out to service Hill of Banchory. A gas supply is available adjacent to the site, and currently serves the Hill of Banchory area. However, during the development of phases 11 and 12 in Hill of Banchory and the Oaklands development including the Banchory Sports Village, the provision of a gas supply was solely for the purpose of supplying gas for cooking, as this remains the popular customer choice. All heating and hot water provision is fed from the district heating network.

The district heating network in Hill of Banchory has been operational for some time. Hot water was originally supplied from a temporary gas boiler. However, the switch from the temporary boiler to the biomass fuelled energy has now taken place, and the temporary boiler has been decommissioned. The network currently serves housing in phases 11 and 12 of Hill of Banchory, as well as the business land to the east and the Oaklands site. This has most recently been expanded to serve the OP2 site. The plan below (fig 16) shows the location of the energy centre and the area it serves. There is also an aerial photograph of the energy centre following its completion. The energy centre has the potential to serve the OP2 site, but an alternative solution for heat and hot water may be required for the OP3 site.



Fig 16 – Masterplan area and existing District Heating Network extent.



The biomass fuelled energy centre was completed in 2012.

3.8 Community Engagement

One of the key elements in developing this masterplan successfully will be the involvement of the local community in its production. North Banchory Company (NBC), being based in Banchory, have made regular community involvement in their operations a priority for many years, and the only real change now is the statutory nature of this process.

With regard to this masterplan area, a draft capacity study was drawn up in 2008, based upon NBC's knowledge of the area, and a Landscape Capacity Study carried out by David Wilson Associates. This formed the basis of the Local Development Plan bid, submitted in November 2008.

Shortly after this submission, Banchory Community Council organised a Planning for Real event entitled 'Making It Real', where NBC displayed the draft capacity study plan, along with details of individual proposals and designs that contributed to the long-term vision for Banchory. This event proved very beneficial in terms of the quantity and detail of feedback received, all of which was considered and taken on board as the masterplan was developed.

This feedback was combined with the responses made to the Main Issues Report, as a more detailed set of proposals was drawn up in support of the proposed Local Development Plan. A presentation was made to the Banchory Community Council on the 11th October 2010, with detailed elements on transport, drainage and design from the design team.

Following the submission of a proposal of Application Notice for the masterplan, a public exhibition was held in the Banchory Business Centre on the 22nd and 23rd November 2012. Following the exhibition, NBC presented the initial outcomes of it to the Community Council on the 10th December 2012. Feedback from this meeting was also documented in detail.

As the detailed design process commenced for phase 1a, a new team of architects was engaged to try to deliver the development in the best possible way. It was during this process that an alternative route to deliver a distributor road was considered, and a planning application was prepared. This alternative proposal was considered to significantly reduce the ecological and environmental impact, whilst still delivering a distributor road link from the A93 to the A980. This was subject to voluntary community consultation.

The exhibition was well attended by local residents, and the subsequent planning application for a distributor road link from the roundabout in the centre of Hill of Banchory, through phase 2 of the masterplan to Raemoir Road attracted over 250 letters of objection.

North Banchory Company therefore met with Aberdeenshire Council to discuss the best way forward, and it was at this stage that the Council made it clear that they were willing to reconsider the distributor road requirement if an acceptable technical solution could be found.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the reason for the amended masterplan is to reflect this revised access solution for the development. Since the consultation in 2018 related to the proposed alternative distributor road was so controversial, it was deemed appropriate to hold a further public exhibition to explain the revised masterplan proposals.

This was carried out on the 28th October 2019, and was well attended by 59 local residents. The response to the amended access solution for the masterplan was met with a great deal of support. Residents were pleased to see the prioritisation of pedestrian and cycle movements over vehicle movements. Concerns were raised about the capacity of the existing roads to accommodate traffic, but people generally accepted that this had been robustly tested in an up to date Transport Assessment based on new survey data. The pedestrian and cycle network, and associated crossings of Raemoir Road and Hill of Banchory West would act as a means to slow traffic down, which was seen as a major benefit, as speeding vehicles on the wide roads was a current concern of several attendees.

Local residents were keen to ensure that if more development happened after the current masterplan was built out, both housing and/or a new secondary school, that the case for a distributor road link between Lochside of Leys and Hill of Banchory would not be tabled again in the future. They were reassured that the Transport Assessment considered a further 200 houses (accessed from Raemoir Road/Hill of Banchory East) and a secondary school (accessed from Hill of Banchory West) and confirmed that a distributor road link was not required in that scenario.

A presentation of the proposed amendment to the masterplan was made to Banchory Community Council on the 11th November 2019, including a report of the feedback received from the exhibition.

The feedback from this meeting was again positive, welcoming the amended proposals and the willingness to seek the views of the community prior to submitting the revisions to the Planning Service.

4 Developing the Design and Layout



4 Developing the Design and Layout

4.1 The Masterplan

The previous chapters identified the site and the surrounding area, and analysed the various factors influencing the design of the masterplan area. This section will look at that analysis and consider the detailed design and layout of the masterplan. The indicative masterplan is shown below for the whole site. This section of the report will explain how it has been developed. It will consider the mix of land uses and identify the measures to be implemented to ensure the development improves Banchory as a place to live, work and play.

The plans are indicative at this stage and should not be understood to give an accurate mix of house types. The development will not exceed the 395 houses allocated in the Local Development Plan unless subsequent Local Development Plans dictate otherwise. The report will thereafter consider in greater detail the proposals for the early phases of development.

The report will then look at details of servicing, open space provision, landscaping, and house designs, and the materials to be used in the development, with examples from the early completions on phase 1a.



Fig 17 – The draft masterplan for Banchory (sites OP2 and OP3)

4.2 Phasing Strategy

Fig 18 shows phase 1 constructed to the east and phase 2 to the west. The employment element of the masterplan is identified in the east, and is expected to be the last part of phase 1 to be delivered, due to the fact that existing employment sites within Hill of Banchory are still available. Phase 2 of the masterplan would be developed from the new roundabout on Raemoir Road.

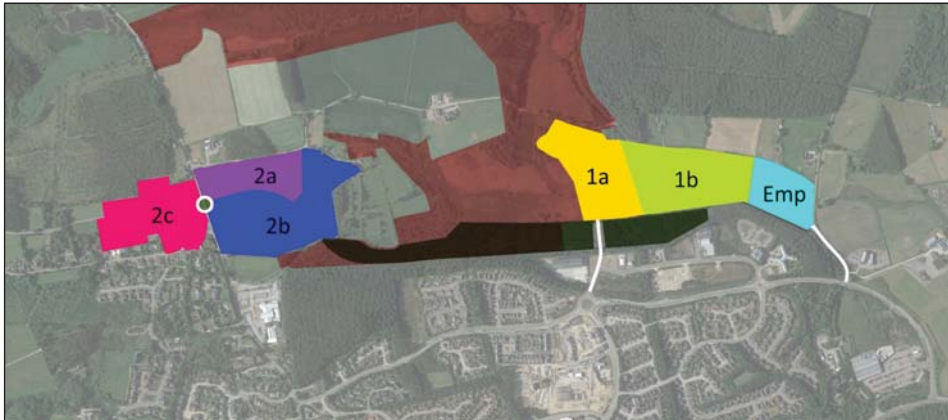


Fig 18 – Phasing diagram.

Fig 19 below shows an indicative phasing schedule for the development, with the lighter blue shading indicating preparatory works and/or a slow rate of development, and the dark blue indicating faster rate of development.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Phase 1a		Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue							
Phase 1b				Light Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue				
Phase 2a						Light Blue	Dark Blue				
Phase 2b							Light Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue
Phase 2c			Light Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue						

Fig 19 – Indicative phasing of development

4.3 Phase 1

The first 56 units in phase 1a of the development have been granted detailed planning permission, under MSC application M/APP/2018/0863. The construction of this phase is well underway, and the design of the second phase of development is now advancing towards the submission of a further MSC application. An additional three units are also planned within phase 1a, subject to agreement on future road alignment.

The number of units within these phases are slightly lower than the original masterplan, which is reflective of the housing market in 2019 compared to 2012-15 when the last masterplan was prepared. However, the overall housing numbers across the masterplan are anticipated to be 395 units, in line with the Local Development Plan Allocation.

Phase 1 is also subject to a detailed flood risk assessment, to demonstrate that, firstly the site is not at risk from flooding in a storm event, and secondly that existing water features can be adequately accommodated and/or improved as part of the development. This has been done for phase 1a in isolation, and is currently being expanded to include phase 1b. This will be submitted as part of an MSC application for phase 1b.

Phase 1a will be accessed from the Hill of Banchory Roundabout, with an emergency access provided to the existing U49K road prior to the completion of the 50th unit. Phase 1b will continue a new road to the East, which will, prior to the completion of the 100th house (unless otherwise agreed via a detailed planning application/roads construction consent) be continued to a 'core road' standard to the junction with Hill of Banchory East adjacent to the Woodend Barn access.

The phasing of the transport network delivery is addressed in sections 4.7 to 4.9 of this report. However, the strategy ensures that phase 1 can be delivered by creating a core road loop with two access points to the existing distributor road network.



Fig 20 – Indicative proposals for phases 1a and 1b

4.4 Phase 2

Phases 2a and 2b will deliver the balance of the OP2 site, which will amount to around 180 homes (assuming phases 1a and 1b will deliver around 165), and Phase 2c will deliver the OP3 site, which is allocated for up to 50 houses. Phases 2a and 2b of the development was initially split into 2 areas, with a view to phase 2a being deliverable as a stand-alone tranche of around 15-20 larger units, but subsequent analysis has shown that this part of the site cannot be adequately serviced independently of phase 2b.

Phases 2a and 2b therefore consist of the land to the East of Raemoir Road and will require the delivery of a new roundabout access to that road for vehicular access. As there is only a single point of access to Raemoir Road, it is proposed that a stretch of distributor road is taken into phase 2b, to allow appropriate access and egress from the site, with the ability to take further core road sections from this spine. This will negate the need for a complete distributor road link from phase 2 to the East of Banchory, and substantially reduce the environmental and ecological impact of such a strategy.

Phase 2c sits to the West of Raemoir Road and will be accessed from the same roundabout. Access to the household waste recycling plant will be maintained through the development.

Phases 2a and 2b will also require the formation of a new waste water pumping station, which will feed back to Hill of Banchory and the public sewer network. Phase 2c can be serviced from an upgrade to the existing pumping station and sewer network on Raemoir Road.

Earlier indicative design work on phases 2a and 2b has been put on hold, with a view to revisiting it to incorporate the new access strategy. This will involve looking at pedestrian and cycle connectivity as a priority, and ensuring the development is as connected as it can be, while the vehicular access strategy meets the necessary standards with the lowest environmental and amenity impact that can be achieved. The masterplan therefore looks at phases 2a and 2b in a higher level, strategic sense than the phase 1 area, which is already under construction.



Fig 21 – Phases 2a, 2b and 2c with indicative road network

It is anticipated that phase 2c will come forward in advance of the balance of phase 2 and will provide the roundabout access to Raemoir Road. A planning application for the delivery of 29 houses on the majority of the Phase 2c site is currently under consideration by Aberdeenshire Council, and is compatible with both the previously approved and this revised masterplan. An indicative layout for phase 2c is shown overleaf. The delivery of the roundabout will also enable the development of additional housing in place of the removed existing junction, but at the time of writing no detailed design for these units has been prepared.



Fig 22 – Indicative proposals for phase2c

4.5 Character Areas and 3D Analysis

Design concepts for the masterplan area have changed somewhat since the previously approved report in 2015, although the fundamental principles remain the same. This has been reflected through the MSC applications for phases 1a and 2c. The previous 3D analysis was based upon a specific layout that has subsequently been superseded, with the appointment of a new architect to oversee the design and planning of the development. The changes are considered to be entirely positive, with a superior layout and house design evident in phase 1a.

The design concept for Phase 1 seeks to take more of a visual influence from the vernacular of traditional Deeside, rather than the generic house types of the early 21st century. The use of vertical timber linings, wet dash render and slate appearance roof tiles, and details such as exposed rafter ends, white windows and simple traditional forms give the development a semi-rural feel that sits comfortably in the landscape.



The first two houses in Phase 1a are complete

Phase 1a is accessed directly from the main roundabout in the centre of Hill of Banchory. Works have been undertaken to provide an attractive landscaped approach to the development, and also back towards Hill of Banchory. The recently completed Oaklands development, with flats facing onto the roundabout, help to frame the approach.



The view looking South across the early completions in Lochside towards the roundabout in Hill of Banchory, with the Oaklands site beyond.

While the access road cuts through the woodland, the substantial depth of retained woodland on either side of the access (approximately 100m from the Northern edge of the Hill of Banchory Business Park and the Southern edge of Lochside of Leys provides a sustainable long-term buffer strip.

The fundamental layout of the first phase has been amended since the earlier masterplan designs, primarily to accommodate a different housing mix (due to the affordable housing requirement being delivered in advance on the Oaklands site, and changes in market demand for private housing in the interim) and the presence of protected species adjacent to the Burn O'Bennie, discovered during detailed ecological surveys of the site. Appropriate buffer zones were therefore designed into the layout of this phase, but this contributed positively to the semi-rural character of the development.

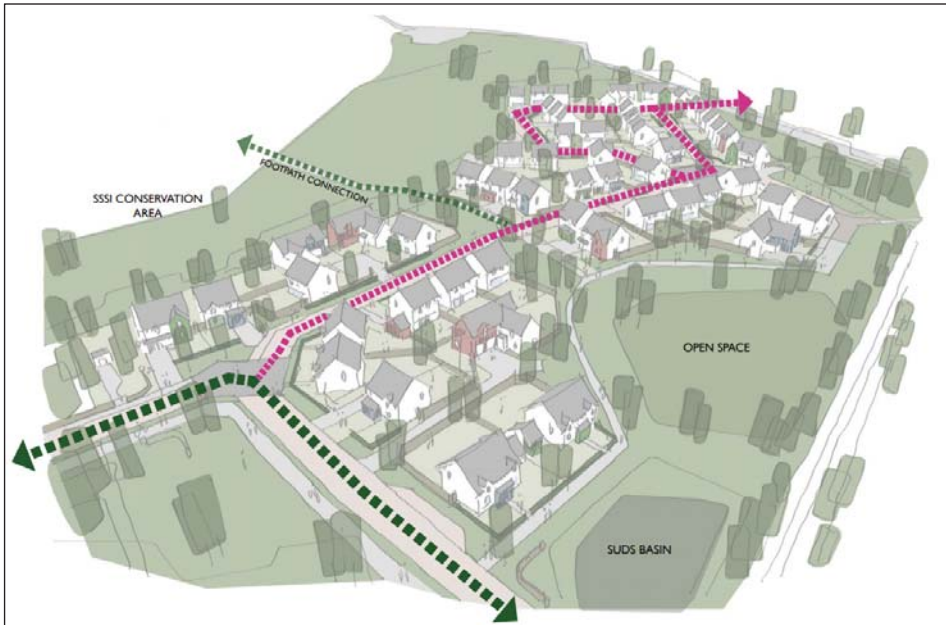


Fig 23 – conceptual design for phase 1a

Consistent with the earlier masterplan. East to west green corridors have been retained in the design, to tie the site successfully into the surrounding landscape, and the adjacent Local Nature Conservation Site. The layout of the first phase has been designed to ensure that the entrance to the development is an attractive square, with house frontages, giving an immediate welcoming impression and natural traffic calming.



The entrance to phase 1a is both welcoming and well traffic calmed. This character will be continued through the development



Fig 24 – the line between public and private realm is not defined by hard boundaries, and contributes to a strong sense of place, encouraging the use of public space and shared streets.

The design and layout principles of phase 1a will be continued into phase 1b, creating a distinct character area. Phase 1b will include affordable housing, potentially with a mix of social rented and low cost shared equity types, and these will be designed to be tenure blind, following the same design principles as the private housing.

It is anticipated at this stage that phase 1b will again be predominantly detached and semi-detached housing, in order to remain marketable. However, as with any development, market conditions are subject to fluctuations and the further into the future a site is planned, the more likely it is that the mix of houses may have to change. However, design principles will remain consistent.

Phase 2c has been designed in a slightly different way, with a more modern contemporary approach. The Upper Lochton area of Banchory is characterised by larger detached housing, and a number of more contemporary designs are present. The continuation of this character is therefore considered to be appropriate.

The design of phase 2c is more rigidly dictated by the shape of the site, and the necessity to maintain access to the Household Waste Recycling Centre, along with the retention of the area of woodland in the centre of the site and no impacts on the woodland to the North of the site.



Fig 25 - concept drawing for part of phase 2c, with larger more contemporary house types set in generous plots.



Fig 26 – Smaller courtyards to the North of the principle core road allow privacy and amenity alongside prioritised vehicle movements



Fig 27 – a CGI of part of the layout for phase 2c, produced to support a current MSC planning application.

For the balance of Phase 2, the design work has not commenced. However, it is logical that this part of the masterplan could accommodate a third distinct character area. With around 200 houses remaining in the LDP allocation, it is likely that phases 2a and 2b will be slightly higher density than phases 1 and 2c, but this will be dependent on market conditions at the time of development.

The detailed design of phases 2a and 2b should therefore be developed as part of an MSC application, as an when there is a clearer understanding of the housing mix. However, it is logical that the whole of the phase 2a and 2b area is, like phases 1a and 1b, of a consistent architectural and layout style, creating a cohesive sense of place.

4.6 Climate

Much of the site is relatively flat and protected from the prevailing wind by the Grampian Hills. Existing woodland around all sides of the site also offer a degree of protection. In addition, Banchory benefits from a pleasant climate compared to other towns in Scotland. Housing has been laid out to maximise passive solar gain, and rear gardens are orientated to the south and west as much as possible. The local climate offers the potential for harnessing solar energy, either for hot water or for the production of electricity, but the existence of the biomass district heating system makes this potentially unnecessary. Nevertheless, many roofs will be orientated to the south, to provide the opportunity for residents to install solar or PV panels and generate sustainable energy.

4.7 Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity

Pedestrian and Cycle. The masterplan area is ideally positioned to benefit from the facilities and services offered in Banchory, as well as the countryside that surrounds it. Subsequent sections of this report will consider the requirements for the masterplan site itself in terms of facilities and services, to ensure the site is sustainable, and residents are less dependent on car travel. Connectivity to and from the surrounding area, and between the areas within it, is key to the success of the development. The initial consideration is the core path network that serves the area. Whilst there are many paths in the area, those included in the Council's Core Path Plan are somewhat disjointed. It does, however, offer connections from the site to the Forestry Commission woodlands to the west and the Deeside Way to the southeast. The path network within the Hill of Banchory area offers excellent foot and cycle access from the residential areas to the Hill of Banchory Primary School, which commonly has more cycles than cars parked outside it.

As part of the revision to the masterplan, additional consideration has been given to the pedestrian and cycle network. With the removal of the peripheral 'distributor road', pedestrian and cycle connectivity has been considered as a separate entity, to ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place to provide the opportunity for a genuine modal shift towards more sustainable means of transport.

Unfortunate cutbacks in public transport services, most notably the removal of the Banchory Town Service buses, places further emphasis on the need to ensure pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is suitable as a fundamental requirement of the masterplan.

In addition to this, subsequent to the approval of the previous iteration of the masterplan for Lochside of Leys, the development of Oaklands has moved the goalposts somewhat. The Oaklands site, previously allocated for unspecified community facilities, with the balance of the site forming 'white land' now accommodates 104 houses/flats, a c.325sqm Co-Op store and the Banchory Sports Village, adjacent to Hill of Banchory Primary School (to which children from phase 1b of the masterplan will be zoned). Planning permission is in place for an additional c.700sqm of gross floor space of retail uses, split between a number of smaller units.

These facilities are within a reasonable walking and cycling distance of most of the Lochside of Leys masterplan area, so appropriate connectivity is of key importance, to reduce the need to rely on vehicular travel.

Set out below is the proposed connectivity strategy, and the plans for its delivery in a phased manner as the site is developed.

Along the south side of the entire site, on the northern edge of Hill of Banchory, a core path runs between the A93 and the A980, linking the Deeside Way to paths to the northwest of the town and beyond. Sections of this core path exist in good condition, and sections are less accessible to all users.

The delivery of the masterplan will help to provide a complete path suitable for all users, and greatly improve connectivity. Paths shown on the plans within this report should be considered indicative in terms of their specific routing, with full detail of the routing provided at the detailed planning stage. All of the paths will be provided within land under the applicant's control, or within already adopted Public Open Space.



Fig 28 – Existing core paths.

All the paths shown on the following plans in yellow will be built to an appropriate standard for all users, most likely with a blinded hardcore finish. However, there is to be a clear distinction between what are core paths and what constitute 'safe routes to schools' which must be lit and built to a suitable adoptable standard (typically 3m wide and finished in bitmac). These routes are shown in red on the following figures. The latter standard of path is likely to require tree felling in places that would not be appropriate, and as such the detailed design will seek to identify the lowest impact route and specification possible. The proposed final path network and safe routes to schools network are therefore identified separately on the subsequent drawings.

Phase 1a consists of 56-59 houses, and vehicular access will be provided from the existing roundabout in the centre of Hill of Banchory. The principle non-motorised connectivity will be to the south, alongside the access road. This will provide convenient access to services and facilities, including bus stops and schools. Fig 29 demonstrates the key elements that will be provided as part of phase 1a.

The core path will be delivered to a suitable standard for a stretch to the west, to provide connections from the new development into Hill of Banchory, ensuring Safe Routes to Schools and convenient access to other services.

The proposals show one new pedestrian crossing, which has already been constructed as part of the early development of Phase 1a. This provides a direct link from the development directly to the core paths within Hill of Banchory, and provide connectivity to schools, the proposed leisure centre, and neighbourhood centre facilities.



Fig 29 – non vehicular access for phase 1a

Phase 1b will deliver around 1-120 more units, bringing the total to around 180. There is also the potential to include 2ha of new business land. Fig 30 shows Phase 1b and the additional upgraded core path and additional paths that will be delivered as part of this phase of development.

The Flood Risk Assessment work has highlighted the importance of ensuring that watercourse crossings do not cause potential blockages. The upgrade of the Eastern section of the core path network, to the South of the Burn O’Bennie, will therefore run parallel to the ‘safe routes to schools’ which will lie to the North of the Burn O’Bennie, with only one principle connection between the two. The adoptable ‘safe route to schools’ type path will, however, continue to the junction with Hill of Banchory East, as connection from the masterplan area by foot and cycle to the facilities at Woodend, Tesco supermarket and future commercial development to the North of Tesco is as important as safe access to schools, in terms of facilitating a modal shift away from private car use.



Fig 30 – non-vehicular access for phase 1b

Future proposed development of an Eco-Village on the OP1 site will also include a safe route to schools route that will be able to tie into the proposed masterplan network at the junction adjacent to the Christian Fellowship Church.

The design of any pedestrian bridges where paths cross the Burn O’Bennie will be done in full consultation with Aberdeenshire Council and SEPA, to ensure there is no potential flood risk generated, and that the crossings are appropriately located and designed.

Phase 2 - The detailed design work for the majority of phase 2 is some way into the future, but it will deliver around 200 more houses on either side of Raemoir Road. Woodland in this area contains more informal paths, and therefore the creation of the main east to west core path will require a greater degree of planning to ensure the best route. The indicative design for phase 2 shows several links to the core path, and the masterplan in turn shows a number of routes from the core path both into the Hill of Banchory area, and down Raemoir Road, providing safe routes to schools and other services.

It is notable that there is a site reserved for a new school to the south of phase 2, and it is important to ensure the potential to link the core path directly into this site is maintained. However, regardless of whether a new school is to be built here, it is important to link the new development to facilities such as the Banchory Sports Village. The amended roads strategy is premised on the importance of ensuring an adoptable footpath link between phase 2 of the masterplan and Hill of Banchory, and this would also provide the linkage to a school should it be built. The route has been shown indicatively on the plan below, and will be subject to detailed survey and design work to determine the best and lowest environmental impact route. The exact standard of this path is also indicative – it should be an adoptable standard, and lit, but there may be sections that require to be narrower than the normal 3 metres, to minimise the need to fell trees to accommodate it.

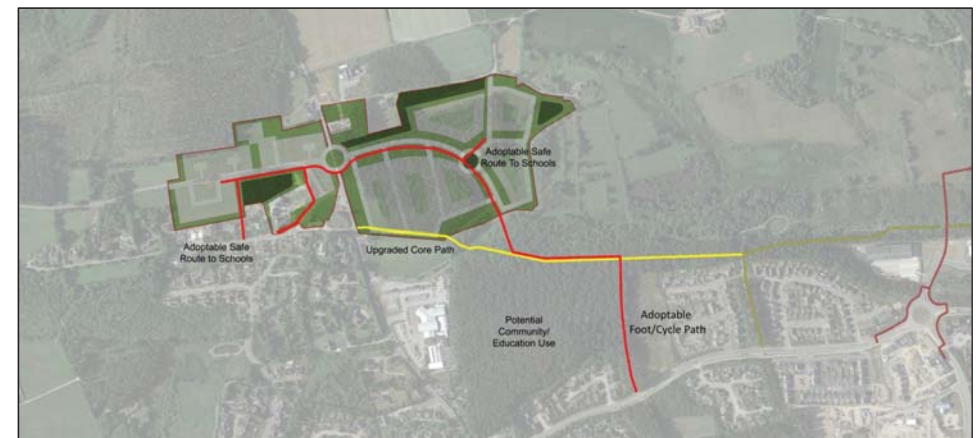


Fig 31 – non vehicular access for phase 2

The detail of this path will therefore be required as a supplement to a planning application for phases 2a and/or 2b.

Phase 2 includes a small area set aside for local retail and commercial uses, to ensure such facilities are available within a reasonable walking catchment of the neighbourhood. It is therefore anticipated that there will be non-motorised movements to this area from existing surrounding residential areas, so connectivity is essential. This potential use is located adjacent to the roundabout, which will include a pedestrian crossing on the southern arm.

The Complete Development will therefore deliver a core path from the east of the town, and the Deeside Way to the wider countryside, and the woodlands to the west of Raemoir Road. Along the route, full connectivity to and from Hill of Banchory and the new Lochside of Leys development will be provided, to ensure a comprehensive network on non-motorised access is delivered.



Fig 32 – the completed masterplan proposal, with links into the existing path network in and around Hill of Banchory, Upper Lochton and Upper Arbeadie, including appropriate adoptable ‘safe route to schools’ links.

Fig 33 below clarifies the location of key services and facilities, and demonstrates how the proposed network is fit for purpose.

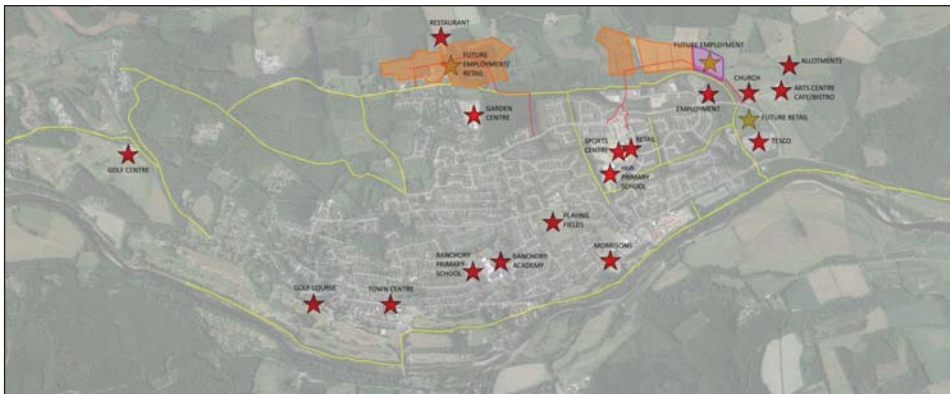


Fig 33 – existing and future facilities and connectivity to the masterplan area.

The development of the masterplan will expand upon the network of paths that are already in place. Leys Estate welcomes responsible access to the countryside, in accordance with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. There are numerous informal paths around the estate land, providing access to informal recreation areas, such as woodland and the Loch of Leys. The development of the masterplan area will link with many of these paths, and connections will be developed where possible. The development of the masterplan area will also facilitate the connection of many of these paths to the core path network, making the wider countryside more accessible to existing residents too. Fig 34 below shows the existing and proposed footpaths around the estate.

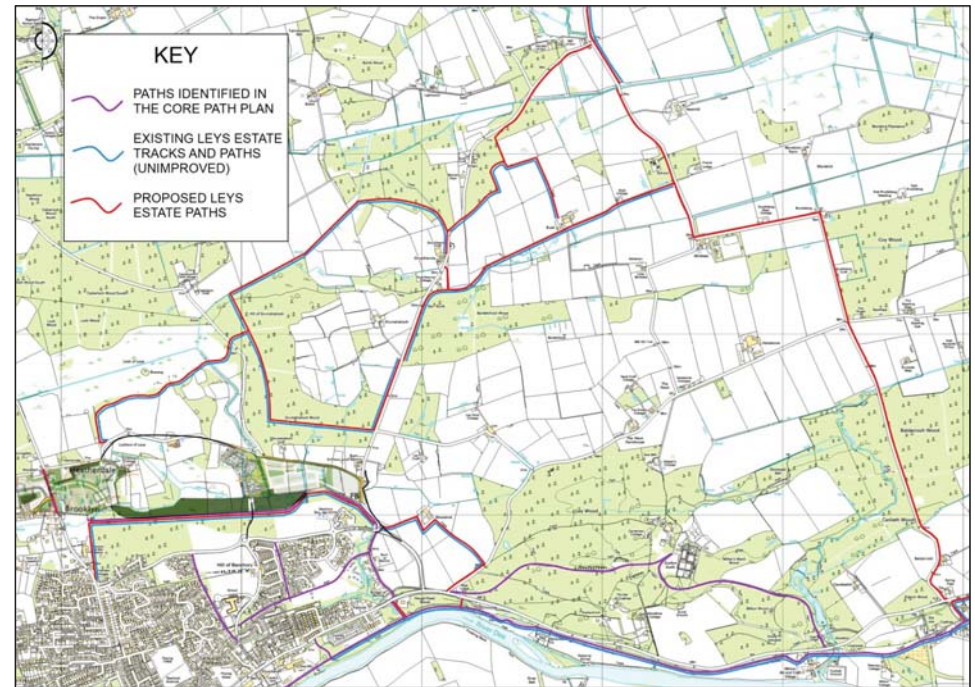


Fig 34 – Leys Estate path network

4.8 Public Transport

Banchory is well served at present by public transport, offering the following range of services.

Mainline corridor:

- 201 Aberdeen - Banchory - Aboyne - Ballater - Braemar (hourly)
- 202 Aberdeen - Banchory - Torphins - Lumphanan - Aboyne (hourly)
- 203 Aberdeen - Banchory - Aboyne - Ballater - Braemar (hourly) (weekdays only)

The 201, 202 and 203 services together provide a 20-minute frequency from Banchory to Aberdeen.

Connecting Services:

- 204 Strachan - Banchory - Aberdeen (2 per day)
- VH3 (Village Hopper) Aboyne - Finzean - Banchory (Thursdays)
- VH5PM (Village Hopper) Aboyne - Lumphanan - Torphins - Banchory (Fridays)

In addition to these services, the Local Development Plan identifies, as part of the OP1 site to the east of the town, an allocation of land for a park and ride facility.

With the recent discontinuation of the Banchory Town Bus Service (replaced by a dial-a-bus service), Public Transport is more reliant on the wider Bus network. Rather than diverting longer distance services around Banchory, as had been explored in the original masterplan, it is now proposed to ensure that the new masterplan area is well connected to the existing network, with a range of walking and cycling routes. The previous section shows how this will be implemented on a phase by phase basis.

This provides the best opportunity to ensure that residents of the new development are within a reasonable distance of a Bus Service. Whilst this may not always be within the ideal 400m distance, it brings all housing with around 600m of an existing bus route.

The addition of bus stops on the A980 (Raemoir Road) close to the new roundabout would bring all of phase 2 (bar a handful of houses in the far eastern corner) within 400m of a bus stop and seems a logical upgrade to deliver as part of the development.

The Core Road strategy through the new development also allows for buses to penetrate the site in the future, for example if the Town Service is reintroduced, which would provide a further improvement to the access to Public Transport.

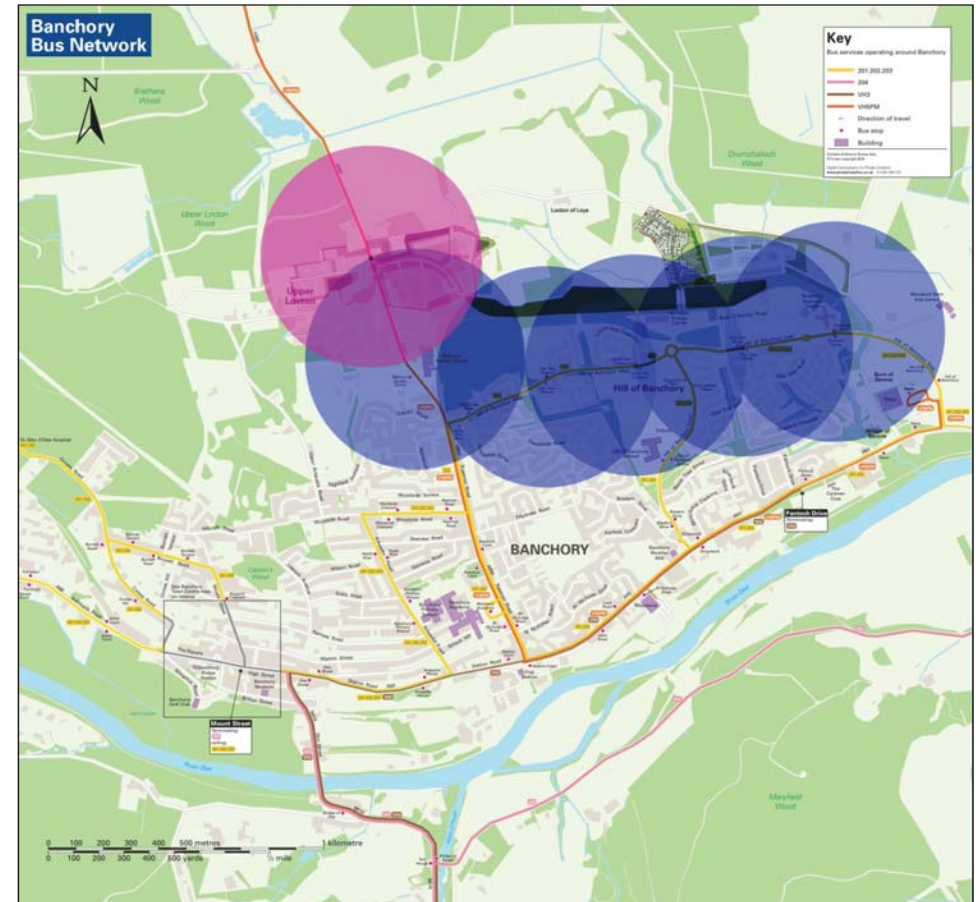


Fig 35 – Existing bus stops (blue), proposed additional stops (pink), and 400m radius circles from each – capturing most of the masterplan.

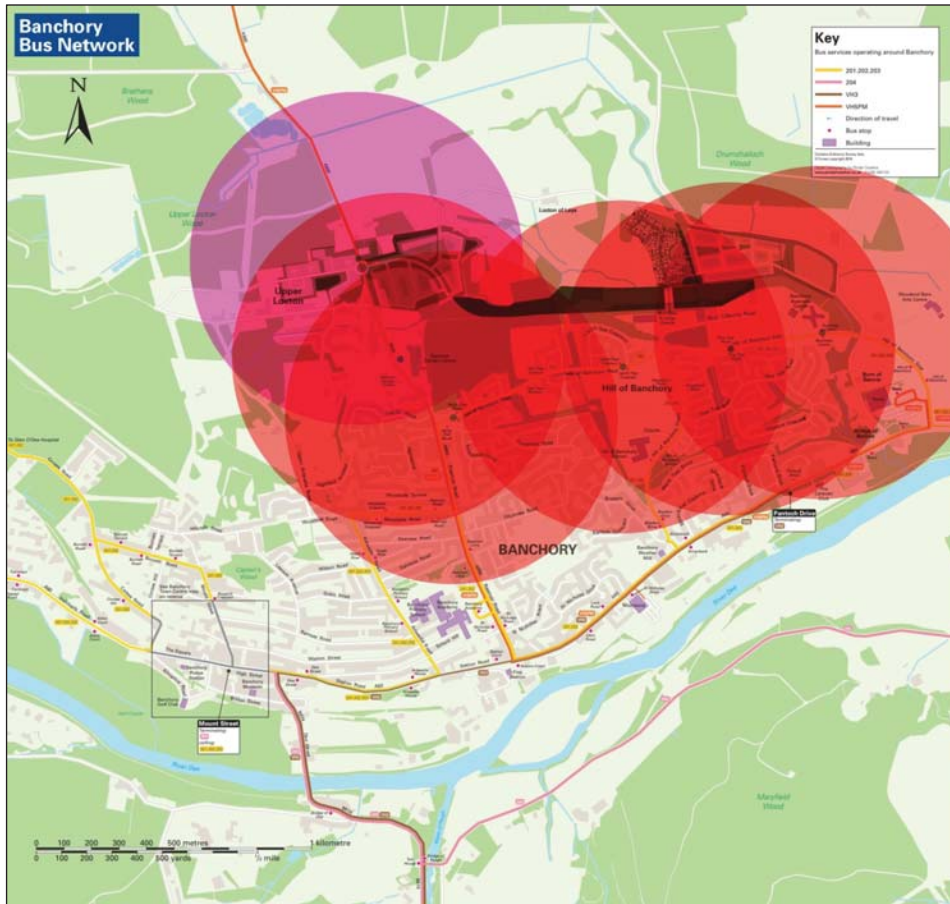


Fig 36 – The whole masterplan falls within 600m of an existing or proposed bus stop.

On the basis of this analysis, it is therefore proposed that phase 2 of the new masterplan delivers new bus stops on the A980 adjacent to the new roundabout (exact position and design to form part of a future detailed planning application), and that a Core Road strategy ensures that future additional bus services could penetrate the site.

Pedestrian and Cycle connectivity between existing Public Transport services and new residential areas is again of key importance, consistent with the previous section of this masterplan.

4.9 Road Infrastructure.

The previous masterplan proposals to deliver a new distributor road around the North of the development have been superseded by a more efficient and lower impact approach of delivering a core road network through the development. In terms of conveyance of vehicles, the proposal achieves the same overall function as the distributor road solution.

A detailed Transport Assessment has therefore been carried out in support of the revised masterplan, incorporating fresh baseline data and an updated consideration of built and committed development.

The phasing of the delivery of the core road network is set out in the following figures.



Fig 37 – location of development with principle roads (red) and unclassified roads (yellow)

As the development progresses, access will generally be from the existing road network in Hill of Banchory to the East and South, and Raemoir Road to the West, but there will be some reliance on the existing unclassified roads for connectivity and access. The development of the site will take several years, and it may therefore be necessary to carry out some improvements such as local widening and passing places on the network to accommodate increased use.

Hill of Banchory West and East will continue to provide a more convenient route between the A980 and the A93 to the east of Banchory for a lot of through traffic. The narrow nature of the minor roads will render them unattractive as a short cut, and with localised improvements to visibility and passing places, they will function successfully.

The development will require certain upgrades to the existing road network to accommodate existing traffic. These will include upgrades to signal functions at the Raemoir Road/A93 and the Dee Street/A93 junctions to optimise their function, and the signalisation of the Hill of Banchory West/Raemoir Road junction, along with the appropriate provision of pedestrian crossings.

Phase 1a consists of 56-59 houses, and will be served from the existing roundabout in the centre of Hill of Banchory. Prior to the occupation of the 50th unit on the site, an emergency access to the existing unclassified road to the North of the site will be provided, along with any necessary upgrades to that road.



Fig 38 – phase 1a road infrastructure

Phase 1b will deliver around 100-120 more units, bringing the total to around 180 houses. This phase can be accommodated by the completion of a loop of Core Road back to Hill of Banchory East, from Phase 1a. This phase will necessitate the optimisation works to the Raemoir Road/A93 and the Dee Street/A93 junction signals.

Prior to the development of the business land adjacent to phase 1b, signalisation of the Hill of Banchory West and Raemoir Road junction will be required. The exact timing and design of this would form part of the detailed planning submission for this phase.



Fig 39 – phase 1b roads infrastructure

Phase 2c is located to the west of the A980, and it is likely that it will be developed in tandem with phase 1b. This phase can be served from a new roundabout onto Raemoir Road, which will be built to distributor road standard. The Core Road through phase 2c will require to be of a suitable standard to accommodate industrial traffic, due to the ongoing function of access to the household waste recycling centre.

The scale of phase 2c and the solely residential nature of it allows it to stand alone in terms of roads infrastructure.



Fig 40 – phase 2c roads infrastructure

Phases 2a and 2b

Phases 2a and 2b together will deliver around 180 houses and will be served from the new roundabout on Raemoir Road. Should phase 2c not have progressed in advance of this phase, then the roundabout will be required prior to the first occupation.

In order to 'future-proof' the road network, it is necessary to provide a stretch of road that is to a 'distributor road' standard, in order to allow loops of core roads to be taken from it, as each of them can accommodate no more than 299 units. The exact design of this distributor road should be assessed through an appropriate detailed planning application, as it may need to include a loop or a roundabout at the Eastern end to ensure it can function appropriately.

The remainder of phases 2a and 2b can be served by subsequent core road loops from this distributor road. However, should the business land in phase 1b not have been developed by this stage, phases 2a and 2b would necessitate the delivery of the signalisation of the Hill of Banchory West and Raemoir Road junction. The exact timing and design of this would form part of the detailed planning submission for this phase.



Fig 41 – phases 2a and 2b roads infrastructure

As part of the phase 2a and 2b development, potential options to stop up or control traffic movements on the existing minor road to the northern edge of the masterplan should be explored, in the interests of long term road safety.

4.10 Land Use

The mix of land uses is specified in the Local Development Plan allocations, for sites OP2 (345 houses and 2ha business land) and OP3 (50 houses). However, it is important to ensure that the further development of these areas does not create an over-reliance on private car use. Urban design

principles have for some time considered the concept of walkable neighbourhoods, based upon 400m (typically 5-minutes) and 800m (typically 10-minutes) walking distances.

It is therefore important to assess the existing facilities that provide a service for the area, within a reasonable walkable neighbourhood, and then consider what is lacking. The key existing and previously proposed facilities identified are: the Banchory Business Centres, the Oaklands Neighbourhood Centre development, including Banchory Sports Village, Dance Studio and Co-Op store, as well as planning permission for additional small retail outlets, Tesco and the Hill of Banchory Primary School. Fig 42 below shows these facilities and sites with 400m (green) and 800m (yellow) radius circles imposed.



Fig 42 – Walkable neighbourhoods from key locations – 400m (green) and 800m (yellow)

Through public consultation, it has been suggested that the further facilities at the Raemoir Garden Centre and Woodend Barn should be noted. These have been annotated on the plans for reference but are not considered key to achieving sustainable neighbourhoods.

Fig 43 shows an interesting picture, in terms of accessible facilities. Employment opportunities in the business land, are easily accessible from phase 1 of the masterplan area, as are the new Banchory Sports Village and Co-Op store at Oaklands. Most of the phase 1 site is within a reasonable 10-minute walking distance of Hill of Banchory Primary School, and around half of it is within a 10-minute walk of

the Tesco supermarket. It is therefore considered that the phase 1 site need not contain any specific services other than the residential and business land identified in the Local Development Plan. This should not lead to a reliance on private car use in order to access essential facilities. Indeed, the attractive nature, and more direct route of the walk between the site and the neighbourhood centre, Tesco, the Business Centres and Hill of Banchory Primary School is likely to actively encourage walking and cycling.

The situation with the phase 2 development is somewhat different, as only a small area of the allocated land falls within a 10-minute walking distance of Oaklands. However, the provision of a direct adoptable walking route between phase 2 and Hill of Banchory will make the slightly longer walk an attractive option to taking the car. Based on solely residential development in the area, a reliance on the private car may be more likely than in phase 1. This is also true for much of the existing development in the Upper Lochton area of Banchory.

It is therefore apparent from this diagram that the provision of some small-scale retail and commercial development within the phase 2 development would be beneficial to both the new and the existing housing areas. The location of such an offering with visibility from Raemoir Road would increase its marketability and accessibility for passing trade. The location of such a use is shown in Fig 43, which demonstrates that all of phase 2 would be within a five minute walk of it, and that all of the Upper Lochton and Upper Arbeadie areas would also benefit from it, reducing reliance on the private car.

Ensuring that the development is as sustainable as possible therefore suggests the inclusion of some commercial/retail provision in phase 2. This is therefore reflected in the masterplan, which shows the opportunity for commercial development adjacent to the Raemoir Road roundabout. This could provide retail and employment opportunities for residents of the new phase 2 development and a considerable number of existing properties.

Planning policy regarding retail (set out in Supplementary Guidance SG Retail 1 of the 2012 Local Development Plan) requires a sequential assessment to be undertaken for retail development outwith defined town centres. However, it states that this is not required where retail provision is sized and located solely to serve the convenience of the local neighbourhood. It should be noted that the intended provision at Lochside of Leys is to serve the local neighbourhood and located to maximise a walking catchment area.



Fig 43 – Walkable neighbourhoods with proposed new commercial/retail provision in phase 2.

4.11 Infrastructure

Foul Drainage

The existing foul drainage arrangements for Hill of Banchory and the Upper Lochton area were identified in section 3.4. One of the key issues with the foul drainage is that the Waste Water Treatment Works is located close to the River Dee. However, development has now extended beyond the ridgeline to the north of the town, and foul drainage must therefore be pumped to the top of the hill in order to discharge by gravity to the Waste Water Treatment Works. An upgrading of the infrastructure will therefore be required to accommodate the new development.

Fig 44 below shows the proposed foul drainage arrangements, with two new pumping stations suggested and an upgrade to the existing pumping station which serves the Upper Lochton area.

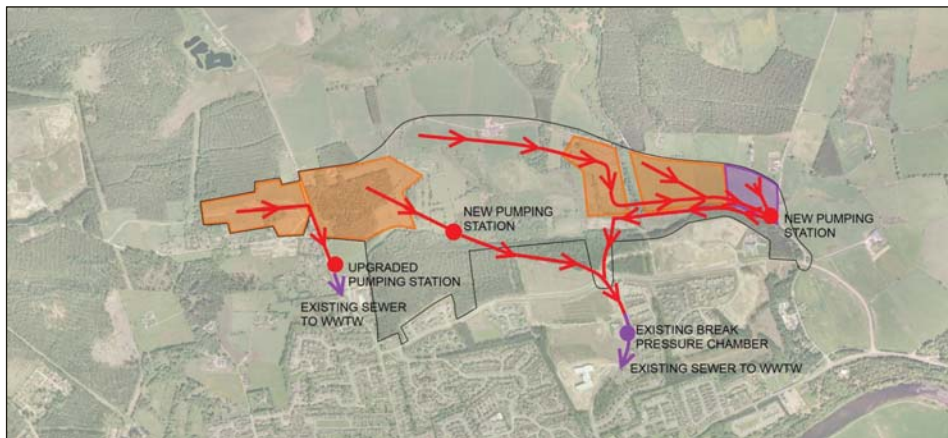


Fig 44 – Proposed foul drainage solution.

The Council's Action Programme identifies a potential necessity to increase capacity at the Banchory Waste Water Treatment Works. A growth project was initiated by Scottish Water in January 2015, and works are now underway to deliver this by 2020. Agreement has been reached with Scottish Water to commence the development on the basis that sufficient capacity is available in the short term, until the upgrade is complete.

Surface Water Drainage

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will be utilised throughout the area. Where there is a potential impact on the Local Nature Conservation Site, it is intended to drain each section of the development to dispersal swales along the boundary of the development. Surface water will be fully treated before discharging to the swales, which are designed solely to maintain a similar pattern of ingress to the Local Nature Conservation Site as occurs at present. This approach will include the appropriate levels of water treatment to ensure the water quality is suitable, but not confine the runoff to a single point, as

is typical of detention basins. This will maintain a similar runoff rate into the wetland areas covered by the Local Nature Conservation Site designation. Surface water runoff from the remainder of the site will feed into detention basins that will in turn discharge to the existing watercourses.

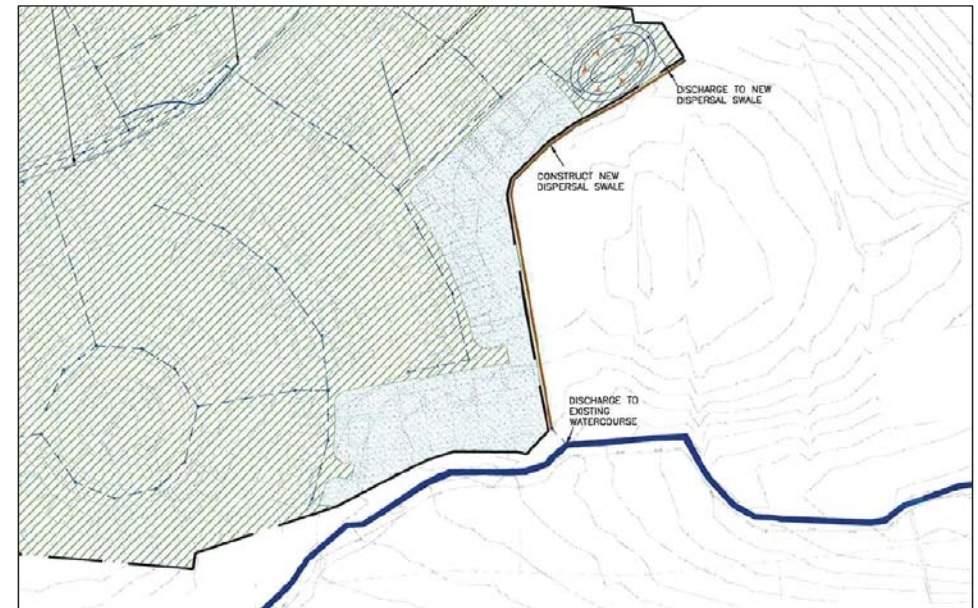


Fig 45 – Typical surface water drainage proposal adjacent to the Local Nature Conservation Site.

An example of how the surface water drainage system will work is shown in fig 45 above. (The full report is appended in section 6). In time, the dispersal swales themselves will provide valuable wildlife habitats, and to aid this eventuality, they will be designed and planted with native species to be as natural as possible.

This approach applies primarily to the western half of site OP2, and a more orthodox system of detention basins will be adopted across the remainder of the masterplan area, as there is no impact on the Local Nature Conservation Site.

Water Supply

Reinforcement works to the public water supply are necessary to facilitate development in Banchory, and these works are now designed, approved and underway.

As part of an ongoing sustainability agenda, reducing the demand for water is identified as a key area of importance. The use of highly water efficient white goods, eco flush toilets aims towards the use of less than 90 litres of water per person per day.

With the water supply for the proposed development being extracted from the River Dee, this is of particular environmental importance, with the measures noted above aimed at ensuring the required supply for the development does not have a negative impact on the habitats of freshwater pearl mussels.

Electricity

In order to serve Hill of Banchory, an upgrade was made to the electricity network to provide additional capacity of 4.7MVA, of which less than half has been used through the development of Hill of Banchory. There is therefore currently enough capacity for the proposed development.

Gas

The Hill of Banchory area is currently served by a gas supply, with most of it utilising gas heating. However, now that the biomass district heating plant is fully commissioned, the new houses at Lochside of Leys, along with the business land, will potentially use gas only for cooking. It is anticipated that development on the OP3 site will require gas to deliver heating, as the district heating network will not serve this land. Where the biomass system is not utilised for heating and hot water, an appropriate alternative system will be used to ensure compliance with the relevant policies on reduction of carbon emissions.

District Heating

The site can be served by the biomass district heating network that delivers energy savings substantially in excess of the requirements of current and emerging building standards. The energy centre is ideally located to provide a connection to both residential and business land in the OP2 area.

The use of solar panels would not be a significant benefit to householders, as hot water is already delivered via the district heating system. However, houses will be orientated where possible to provide an opportunity for the use of solar or PV panels as a householder's own choice, but this would be a private matter for them. It is noted that the biomass energy centre itself has a total of 298 photovoltaic panels on the roof, providing the necessary power to run it, and additionally, feed back into the national grid.

The use of the biomass district heating network and improvements to the building envelope can deliver a low to zero carbon solution.

Within the OP3 site, it is proposed to use solar PV panels as standard in order to address the need to reduce carbon emissions, or alternative low and zero carbon technologies, such as air source heat pumps. The houses will therefore comply with the relevant planning policies at the time of the development, as well as the appropriate Building Standards.

4.12 Facilities

Retail

Growth of the town over the last 50 years has been predominantly residential, and while the services offered in the high street are some distance from much of the population, it continues to be a healthy centre.



Banchory High Street remains healthy and vibrant.

Until relatively recently, Banchory lacked a choice of large supermarket, with Morrisons the only store offering a reasonable range of convenience goods (approximately 2000sqm gross floor area, including a café). Tesco have developed a store on the eastern edge of the town, measuring 4200sqm gross, which reduces the necessity for residents to travel to a large store (previously Westhill or Aberdeen were the popular alternatives).



Tesco Store, opened in 2011 on the eastern edge of Banchory.

A continued increase in the population of Banchory will provide additional expenditure for the town centre and for the out of centre shops, but there is also a need to address local retail provision to encourage a modal shift away from reliance on private car travel. Section 4.10 – Land Use above addresses the locational requirement for retail provision. Given the existing shops that Banchory offers, the priority for the new development would be a small-scale convenience offering to serve a walking catchment area.

In 2019, a new Co-Op store was opened at the Oaklands Neighbourhood Centre site, which serves a substantial walking catchment, and the adjacent Banchory Sports Village also opened, providing sports and leisure facilities in the heart of the residential area of Hill of Banchory, as well as Lochside of Leys. These facilities are excellently located to be accessible to the masterplan area without the need to rely on private cars.

The emerging Local Development Plan identifies land to the immediate North of Tesco, allocated for some time for employment use, as suitable for rezoning to commercial uses. Public consultation has commenced with regard to delivering a mix of retail uses on the site that would again fall within a walking catchment of much of the masterplan area.



Banchory Sports Village



Oaklands Co-Op store

Healthcare

The existing health care facilities in Banchory are stretched at present. The location of the surgery and medical centre at the Bellfield in the town centre is readily accessible, but it does not have enough space to expand to provide the necessary service for the growing catchment area. The Local Development Plan identifies a site at Silverbank, for the development of a new medical centre. This would be substantially closer to the masterplan site than the existing facility.

Education

The situation with education provision in Banchory has changed since the previous masterplan was approved. The completion of Banchory Sports Village allows for the redevelopment of the swimming pool at Banchory Academy, and changes to the delivery of the curriculum across all secondary schools in Aberdeenshire has led to a re-assessment of the capacities. Banchory Academy is therefore considered to have enough capacity to accommodate the proposed masterplan development, as well as the recent development of 104 houses at Oaklands.

The Local Development maintains a reservation (site R3) in the Hill of Banchory for a new education facility, but there are no committed funds in the Council's capital plan to deliver a replacement Academy in the foreseeable future. It is therefore envisaged that the masterplan must be delivered with an assumption that Banchory Academy will not move to a new location, and that appropriate access to the existing site, primarily by foot or cycle, be the priority.

Regarding Primary School provision, a rezoning exercise has been carried out to direct children from phase 1a of the masterplan to Banchory Primary School, with a view to balancing the school rolls between the two primary schools. The Oaklands development, and phase 1b of the masterplan remain zoned to Hill of Banchory Primary School, and developer contributions will be payable across the whole masterplan site to offset impacts of new housing on ongoing school rolls.

In addition to the above, however, the pedestrian and cycle network proposed as part of the masterplan will, by default, offer excellent connectivity to the R3 site. If it is developed for education, or any other community uses, in the fullness of time, it will be well placed to ensure a large walking catchment.

Playing Fields

The settlement infrastructure requirements set out in the 2017 Local Development Plan include the need for a full-sized pitch and a small-sided pitch. However, the requirement for an all weather pitch is included as part of the OP1 development to the east of the town – not on the OP2 site. Discussions are ongoing about the best means to deliver the playing fields requirement for Banchory.

4.13 Servicing

Service vehicles

Roads and streets will be designed in more detail as part of the detailed planning application process, and subsequent application for Roads Construction Consent. Swept path analysis will be carried out to ensure that none of the 'Designing Streets' based road geometry will restrict access for service vehicles. Most residential streets link to each other in a grid format, with cul-de-sacs only used when necessary. This should further ease the access to the site for service vehicles, by reducing the need to reverse.

Street Lighting

Street lighting is an important issue to address, due to the location of the site on the periphery of the town, and the adjacent habitat areas. Appropriate lighting of pedestrian and cycle links will be considered via detailed planning applications.

Parking

The implementation of a Designing Streets approach to developments has created a requirement to be more specific about the provision of useable parking areas for visitors, in addition to the standards required for households. The detailed design of phases through the delivery of this masterplan will allow for additional parking for visitors, with space for one additional space for every four houses utilised as a sensible guide. Exact provision will be agreed with the Council's Roads Service on a phase by phase basis.

Within the design for phase 1a and Phase 2c, garage dimensions have also been increased to ensure they can reasonably be used as a parking space within private house plots, and therefore contribute towards the parking for the overall development site.

Regarding the wider parking constraints in Banchory, the emerging Local Development Plan continues to allocate land for a Park and Choose facility on the OP1 site to the East of the town, which will reduce pressure on long term town centre parking.

4.14 Existing Natural Features

Many of the key existing natural features on the site have been considered in the site analysis. The Local Development Plan includes a protected designation over the woodland strip between the masterplan, Hill of Banchory, and the Local Nature Conservation Site. However, there are other features that should be protected as part of the development. The principle feature not directly protected by the Local Development Plan is the Burn O' Bennie, which flows from the Loch of Leys area to the River Dee. This is a tributary of the River Dee, which is protected as a Special Area of Conservation.



The Burn O'Bennie running through native broadleaf trees.

The Burn O' Bennie is a particularly attractive feature, with mature broadleaf trees in places along its length. It has therefore been identified in the masterplan as an area suitable for informal recreation. Detailed assessments in advance of phase 1a identified the need for additional open space alongside the burn, to afford protection to protected species in the area. This has not only contributed to the overall open space provision, but also the visual amenity of the development. Access for pedestrians and cyclists across the burn will be provided - albeit limited to key locations to reduce the potential for additional flood risks - connecting the Core Path Network to the wider Leys Estate paths.

The remainder of phase 1 is largely agricultural land, of little ecological or visual merit, and development of it will have negligible impact.

Phase 2 is largely made up of commercial woodland, some of which will be felled to make way for the development. There are blocks of woodland to the north and south of the site that provide valuable shelter and visual buffers, and these will be retained and bolstered to ensure the site is developed sympathetically. A further section of mature woodland will be retained along the Raemoir Road, and bolstered with new planting, to ensure a green approach to the town is retained.

Within the OP3 site, there is a single block of woodland that will be retained in its current state, as a valuable visual feature.

It is noted, however, that much of the woodland is of a commercial nature, planted in the mid-20th Century, and is included within Leys Estate's approved Woodland Management Plan for ongoing thinning, felling and replanting.



Fig 46 – Existing Natural Features

4.15 Open Space

The approach to providing open space within developments changed as part of the 2012 Local Development Plan review process. Assessment of settlements across Aberdeenshire identified that, on average, they contained approximately 40% public space, compared to the requirement in the previous development plan to provide around a third of that space in new developments. However, with the high demand for housing land, the need to maximise return on sites, and the fact that the Council will no longer adopt public open space, the provision of more open space than necessary is prohibitive.

The Local Development Plan identifies a requirement for 40% of new developments to be provided as open space but is also more flexible as to what constitutes public open space. This can include streets, surface water drainage areas, and can also include nearby and accessible outdoor recreation facilities. An emphasis is placed on accessibility to public open space, and the provision for all age groups and abilities.

The masterplan area has an extensive valuable resource of informal recreation opportunities in close proximity. Leys Estate provides a wide network of paths for walking and cycling as well as bridleways. The OP2 site is bisected by a protected Local Nature Conservation Site, which offers a wildlife rich area on the doorstep of much of the development. This protected area extends north to include the Loch of Leys, a drained loch providing a wetland of exceptional beauty and biodiversity. To the west of the site,

adjacent to site OP3, extensive Forestry Commission controlled land provides a network of woodland walks.

To the east of the OP2 site lie the recently completed pitches of Deeside Rugby Club, and the allotments, and wild garden associated with Woodend Barn. The grounds of Crathes Castle are a short distance further East. To the south, the local path network connects to the Deeside Way, the former railway line that runs from Aberdeen to Ballater and provides cycling and walking along the River Dee.

The masterplan, as detailed above, sets out the methods for providing adequate connection to the surrounding recreational resources. In terms of more localised public open space, the Council’s Parks and Open Spaces Strategy sets out the following requirements for a development of the scale of sites OP2 and OP3.

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
250-599	Scale 2 Masterplan Detailed app	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organised Sports ➤ Community Play Areas ➤ Community Food Growing ➤ Burial Grounds ➤ Neighbourhood Greenspace ➤ Community Woodlands ➤ Blue-green Corridors ➤ Neighbourhood Streets 	Upto 1 1-2 12-30/0.25-0.5ha	1500-2000m 400m 800m	40% of site
			As Appropriate	n/a	
			As Appropriate	(500m)	
			As Appropriate	n/a	
			As Appropriate	n/a	

Fig 47 – Open space requirements

However, despite the rich variety of surrounding countryside and recreation opportunities, the proposed development itself contains substantial areas of open space, and with the inclusion of the public streets and open spaces as well as more traditional green areas, over 40% of the site is public realm, as shown below and overleaf in the green shaded areas.

As mentioned elsewhere in this masterplan, the layouts for phase 1a, 1b and 2c have been worked up in considerably more detail, in consultation with the landowner and Bancon Homes, and constitute a more finalised design. Through this process, the amount of public open space has increased as the design has been refined.

The layout for the balance of phase 2 remains indicative at this stage, and as such still needs to go through this iterative design and consultation process. As the two areas have a clearly separate character and setting, it is logical to state within this masterplan that each of the areas must contain at least 40% public open space independently of each other.

In addition to individual areas of the development delivering the 40% Public Open Space required by the Local Development Plan, the whole masterplan, and the associated non-vehicular access strategy, offers excellent connectivity into and around the adjacent public open space, including the Local Nature Conservation Site, surrounding woodlands and the wider countryside.



Fig 48 – Public Open Space within phase 1, meeting the 40% requirement set by the Local Development Plan.



Fig 49 – Phase 2c will also deliver 40% or more Public Open Space.

Organised Sports

As discussed above, the opening of the rugby pitches at Woodend has relieved the pressure on soccer pitches in the town, but it still lacks an all-weather pitch. The delivery of the leisure centre on the community facilities site in Hill of Banchory has also greatly enhanced the sporting facilities in the area. The Local Development Plan identifies the need for a full-sized football pitch (amended to an all-weather pitch in the emerging plan), which has been explored in 4.12 above.

Community Play Areas

Development of Hill of Banchory was characterised by several small play areas, but the benefit of masterplanning a site allows for a longer-term solution to be sought. Play areas are more likely to be used where they are centrally located and of a size that attracts families and children as an outdoor activity. It is logical, therefore, that there be a play area located centrally within phase 1 and also within phase 2. These will be identified and detailed within subsequent MSC planning applications.

Community Food Growing

The Local Development Plan states the need for community food growing within 800m of new development. However, the allotments operated at the Woodend Barn to the east of the town are of a particularly high standard, with excellent facilities, and it is logical to seek to make the most of that. Only phase 1b would fall within the 800m distance, but the longer travel to it from other parts of the masterplan would be preferable to creating a second allotments facility. Allotment provision at Woodend has been expanded recently due to local demand, largely from residents of the Hill of Banchory area, and it is envisaged that it could be further expanded in the future to meet the demand. The allotments and the Lochside of Leys masterplan area lies within the same land ownership, so there is a clear connection between the two.

Neighbourhood Greenspace

The nature of the site will ensure the provision of ample areas of neighbourhood greenspace.

Community Woodlands

As with the Hill of Banchory development, it is proposed that areas of trees, and woodland belts be retained to provide a context for the development to sit in. Much of this is protected by the designations in the Local Development Plan (e.g. protected area P7). The site is surrounded to the North and West by areas of woodland, namely Upper Lochton Wood, Catterloch Wood and Drumshalloch Wood. To the east, Ley Wood surrounds Crathes Castle. Woodland areas will therefore be accessible within 500m of all areas of the masterplan.

Blue-green Corridors

The proposed methods of surface water drainage are discussed above. The design seeks to ensure a similar rate of runoff and distribution of surface water into the Local Nature Conservation Site, though dispersal trenches. These would be planted, and allowed to develop overtime, into areas of high biodiversity value. Elsewhere, more typical surface water drainage proposals will be introduced, but

detention basins will be landscaped and designed appropriately to be an attractive contribution to the overall green space.

Neighbourhood Streets

The idea of neighbourhood streets is set out in Designing Streets but is not a new concept. Historically, streets were communal areas where people interacted, but over time they became dominated by motor vehicles, and pedestrians were marginalised. Whilst primary transport corridors must be maintained for vehicular traffic, the remainder of the development will be designed with the ease of use, safety and enjoyment of pedestrians and cyclists as the priority.

Due to most of the masterplan area being residential, the priority is to reduce the divide between public and private realm, rather than creating spaces for activities that would be appropriate in a town centre. The design of streets over the last decade segregated roads from pavements and from private gardens. The front gardens of properties very much became the private car parking area, with the rear gardens fenced off from the public realm. The alteration of this concept will provide safe shared surfaces, and use on-street parking, and variable building lines to enable people to enjoy the public realm, rather than it being a purely functional space.

Maintenance of Public Open Space

Some areas of public open space will be adopted as part of the road network, in accordance with the designing streets principles, but most of it will remain in the control of the developer. A factoring arrangement for all the public open space not adopted by the Council will be put in place. This has been established through the planning application for phase 1a, and the remainder of the masterplan will be dealt with in a similar manner.

4.16 Landscaping

Landscape proposals will be developed in greater detail as part of detailed planning applications, but the wider principles are detailed in the Landscape Capacity Report appended in section 6. The site will be primarily visible from the Raemoir Road on the approach to the town from the North, and structural planting to fill gaps in the existing woodland will help to screen the site appropriately.

Landscaping around areas of public open space, including within the neighbourhood streets, will be native species, and will be aimed at both improving the visual appearance of the development, and increasing the biodiversity value of the area.

The ecological assessment of the site, and further input from the Leys Estate have suggested the inclusion of some structural planting to the north of the masterplan area, providing a connection from Drumshalloch Wood in the east to Upper Lochton and Brathens Woods to the west.

The purpose of this planting is twofold. Firstly, it provides compensatory planting for the area lost to development in phases 2a and 2b. This area of commercial woodland was planted in the 1950s and as a result is due for rotation. It is of limited ecological value due to a large number of informal footpaths that have been formed through it, limiting the amount of ground cover present. However, it is considered important to retain a strip of woodland on the Raemoir Road, around the south and west of phase 2b. A depth of roughly 20m, should provide screening and will help to ensure connectivity between larger, more valuable woodland areas is maintained. More detailed assessment at the time of implementation will determine what woodland can be retained and what is required in terms of additional planting or replacement planting to maximise the benefit of this strip. Given that its permanent function will be as amenity woodland, the species mix will be chosen to support this, rather than the commercial crop that exists.

Within phase 2b, the woodland is largely commercial plantation, but there are smaller areas of more valuable woodland. A detailed survey of the area will be carried out prior to the submission of an MSC or FPP application for the phase, with the detailed layout informed by it, with the retention of valuable trees and wooded areas as public open space a priority.

In total, the woodland due to be felled (with or without development proceeding) is 4.5ha in area. The compensatory planting proposed along the South side of the Loch of Leys is in excess of 5ha in area, so there will be a net gain. Although outwith the masterplan/PPiP area, the compensatory planting shown in Fig 50 is on land within the same ownership as the applicant, and as such there are appropriate conditions on the PPiP that ensure the planting is carried out appropriately and timeously.

The second benefit of the proposed compensatory planting is that rather than a commercial crop, this c.5ha of planting is intended solely to be amenity woodland, aimed at improving the ecological value of the area and to compliment a long term desire to restore the Loch of Leys to a wetland of high ecological value. This woodland will connect very large areas of fragmented woodland to the East and West of Banchory and provide a substantial benefit to species such as red squirrel, which can be found in the area. The species of trees to be planted will be selected with a view to providing the best habitat for such species.



Fig 50 – Indicative structural woodland planting on Leys Estate.

4.17 Density

In accord with the Strategic Development Plan guidance, it is proposed to develop the masterplan area at a higher density than much of the Hill of Banchory area. However, market conditions, and the peripheral location of the development in the town will also have to be considered. Whilst the Strategic Development Plan seeks to increase densities towards a target of 30 houses per hectare, this is not appropriate in all locations, and Banchory has a lower density of development than that. The area of the site is large enough to accommodate the allocated housing numbers, along with a 40% public open space contribution, and all other requirements, while applying a density that is suitable to the location.

Phase 1 and phase 2c are, at the time of writing, predominantly detached and semi-detached house types. This is reflective of the market conditions at the time, and it is important that the masterplan can adapt to the changing market and economic conditions throughout its delivery. The delivery of the masterplan could take 8-10 years, and the economy of the North East has historically shown that significant changes can occur over that timescale. Additional unknown matters such as the impact of Brexit cast further doubt over the shape of the housing market in years to come.

The masterplan therefore allows for a considerable degree of flexibility, particularly with regard to phases 2a and 2b, where design work has not commenced beyond the high-level roads structure.

4.18 Adaptability

The aim of the open space provision is to deliver the appropriate areas for formal play and ensure that the remainder is flexible and relatively easy to maintain, in line with the Council’s policy position. However, in terms of quantity, there is a considerable amount of open space, and uses within it will remain flexible in the long term.

4.19 Design Guide

A design guide for all proposed development within the masterplan area has been prepared. It has been written in such a way that it can be extracted from the masterplan as a stand-alone document, and be utilised as part of the missives in house sales, to ensure continued control over the area. Its contents are as follows: -

- A. Introduction
- B. Form of Development
- C. Road Systems
- D. Landscape Treatment
- E. Housing Layout
- F. House Envelope Design
- G. Community/Commercial Development
- H. Business/Industrial Development

A. Introduction

Background

The development of Hill of Banchory began in 1996, and includes over 500 houses, a primary school, business park and a dance school, With Banchory Sports Village and a new Co-Op store recently completed. The development of this land was steered by a Design Guide prepared in 1996, which has ensured that an appropriate quality of design, layout and environment has been maintained at every stage. The initial allocations of development land are now exhausted, however, land for the remaining 170 houses has now been replaced by a reservation for a new secondary school.

It is therefore appropriate that this next step in the further expansion of Banchory is also covered by a suitable Design Guide, which will provide the basis for future planning applications, as well as providing guidance for home owners who may wish to make alterations to their houses in the future.

Aims and Objectives

North Banchory Company require that, in any development that takes place at Lochside of Leys, every endeavour will be made to achieve a high standard of housing, townscape, environmental and landscape design. The masterplan also identifies the requirements for employment, commercial and community uses within Lochside of Leys. Exceptional care must be taken to ensure that development is not only attractive to the eye, but fulfils as many needs as are feasibly attainable, and ensures that residents enjoy the highest standards of residential amenity.

Whilst high quality modern design will be welcomed, particularly for larger public and commercial buildings, there will be a preference for the inclusion of vernacular features, particularly in housing

areas. Good design is based on well proven and accepted principles which will be adopted as the visual and physical criteria for this guide. The provision of an updated Design Guide, to provide a set of generally accepted principles that set an appropriate design standard will ensure that the evolution of that sense of place can continue successfully.

Community Involvement

The Lochside of Leys development has been the subject of a masterplan process, which has included significant public consultation. An exhibition was held in November 2012 and follow up meetings were held with the Community Council and other local groups. It has always been a priority for North Banchory Company to maintain transparency and interaction with the local community, and this will continue throughout the development of Lochside of Leys.

General Design Principles

Hill of Banchory was developed in an area cleared of commercial woodland, and therefore brought about a significant change to the landscape. However, the retention of tree belts around the periphery of the site, and along key corridors through the site, maintained a sense of scale and character. Lochside of Leys is to be developed in a mixture of open agricultural land and woodland but will provide an important transition between the town and the adjacent countryside, which includes the Loch of Leys Local Nature Conservation Site. Structural planting, particularly around the junction with Raemoir Road, along with the inclusion of larger areas of public open space than at Hill of Banchory, will ensure the area retains an appropriate landscape character.

Particular attention shall be given to the provision of pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and access to public transport, to minimise the reliance on motor cars. Throughout the development, signage and roadside furniture should be limited. Good layout design, compliance with the principles of Designing Streets and efficient management should minimise their requirement.

Future Controls

Open space - In a change from most developments carried out in the past, including the early stages of Hill of Banchory, the Local Authority will not now adopt the responsibility for maintenance and management of public open space. There is, however, a planning policy requirement for more public open space than in previous years. The developer will therefore retain the responsibility for these areas, and appropriate factoring arrangements will be employed to ensure suitable management and maintenance of them.

Alterations and extensions to buildings - In November 2012, changes to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 provided owners with greater freedom to alter and extend their homes. However, the sensitivity of the Lochside of Leys area has led to the Council removing these rights from housing in the masterplan area, so any alteration or extensions to buildings are likely to require planning permission.

The relevant elements of this Design Guide will therefore be incorporated into the titles of any houses to ensure that departure from them for any extension or alterations to properties will not be readily permitted. This control will operate in addition to the planning condition that removes permitted development rights from the masterplan area.

B. Form of Development

General

The associated masterplan has been prepared to ensure that the proposed development is appropriately contained within the landscape, both as it exists at the moment and in its final planned form. The principal purpose of this Design Guide is to ensure that the developments themselves are well designed and fit readily with both the landscape character of the area, and the implemented masterplan for Lochside of Leys.

Regional Character

Traditional mid to late 19th century architecture provides the principle character of the Banchory area. Buildings generally have granite or harled walls, pitched slated roofs, often with ornate eaves detailing, half dormer windows, and pitched roof extensions. Hill of Banchory has successfully utilised the traditional proportions and appearance of the local vernacular buildings, and this approach should be continued in the Lochside of Leys development.

Variety of Housing Layouts

There should be a variety of housing densities within the site, with generally lower density areas to the west and generally higher densities in the central and eastern areas.

C. Road System

Road Hierarchy

There will be two distinct road types in the Lochside of Leys Development. Strategically, there is a requirement for a core road network to serve the development, and this will comply with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The road will be 6.0m in width, and include foot and cycle paths along its length (unless this is agreed as a remote provision). Where it meets Raemoir Road, there will be a new roundabout, which will provide a new northern entrance to Banchory, and slow traffic speeds accordingly.

Designing Streets

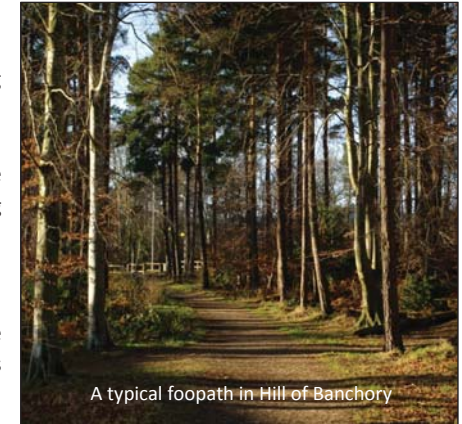
Apart from this core road network, the development will follow the principles of Designing Streets, or any superseding guide. The aim of Designing Streets is to create more attractive and welcoming streets, where pedestrian and cycle movements have priority over vehicle movements. Traffic speeds

are slowed through design and layout, rather than traffic calming measures, and the streets become valuable areas of public realm, rather than corridors for car movements.

Streets will follow a general grid pattern to avoid cul-de-sacs, and where vehicle connectivity is not possible, connections for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided.

Cycle and Foot Paths

Within the residential areas, the use of shared surfaces will be utilised, with the design reducing vehicle speeds to a point where it is safe and convenient for cyclists and pedestrians. Pedestrian and cycle connections will also be provided to the local core path network. A key core path runs along the southern boundary of the masterplan site, and regular connections to this will enable convenient and safe walking and cycling to services, facilities and schools. This will be appropriately lit to provide safe routes to schools, whilst ensuring no adverse impacts on the Local Nature Conservation Site are created.



Bus Stops

Additional bus stops on Raemoir Road will ensure that the majority of the masterplan area falls within the ideal 400m of a bus stop, and all of it within 600m of a stop.

C. Landscape Treatment – Play Area Network

Introduction

The development site lies to the north of a ridge, and south of the Loch of Leys and surrounding woodland. The development will therefore be relatively well contained within this landscape, but particular care must be taken regarding the Local Nature Conservation Site, which splits the site into its east and west component parts.

Boundary Landscape Design

The proposed development site is of a different character to Hill of Banchory, which was laid out in felled commercial woodland. Only a small part of Lochside of Leys will be on land cleared of trees, with the remainder on open farmland between the retained conifer belt to the north of Hill of Banchory, and the larger areas of woodlands and Loch of Leys to the north.

As part of the long-term management of the Loch of Leys area, the provision of additional tree planting north of the development site may be beneficial, both by providing screening of the development area from the north, and also by linking existing woodland and improving wildlife habitats. This possibility is shown below.



Potential planting proposals adjacent to Loch of Leys

Internal Landscape Design

The key areas for tree planting within the site are where the site bounds the Local Nature Conservation Site, where native broadleaf trees and hedging will be used, to create an appropriate edge to the development, and also restrict any encroachment onto the protected area from households, both visually and in terms of garden waste etc. Where these are positioned within house feus, house purchasers shall not remove this boundary planting without express consent and appropriate justification.

Alongside Raemoir Road, more substantial tree belts are to be introduced, to create an attractive approach to the town from the north, and to create an appropriate transition between housing areas and the countryside beyond.

Where practical, existing trees and landscape features, such as the tree lined Burn O' Bennie and clusters of broadleaf trees, will be retained as part of the development. Landscaping within the development shall include native species, and be as natural and self-maintaining as possible. Trees within the road carriageway will be included as part of the Designing Streets methodology, to reduce traffic speeds and improve the safety and enjoyment of streets for pedestrians and cyclists.

Local Amenity Planting/Play Areas

Each individual phase of the development will be accompanied by a set of detailed landscape planting proposals, with schedules of species to be used. These should be consistent throughout the development of Lochside of Leys to ensure an appropriate theme is maintained.

Local play areas and kick-about areas will be provided in accordance with Planning policy. Where practical, these will be larger and well equipped areas, located centrally to areas of housing, with good pedestrian and cycle links, rather than small play areas dotted around the site. This will ensure a better quality of outdoor play for younger residents.

Maintenance of the local amenity planting and landscaping (areas not adopted by Aberdeenshire Council) will be carried out by the developer, or by an appropriate factoring arrangement with a specialist maintenance company. These areas will be maintained to a high standard at all times, but it is important to note that maintenance schedules and methods may not be identical to Hill of Banchory, where most amenity areas have been adopted and are maintained by Aberdeenshire Council.

E. Housing Layout

General

As mentioned previously, the principles of Designing Streets will be adopted, leading to safe and attractive public areas between houses, where pedestrian and cycle movement is not segregated from vehicle movement. This will, in turn, reduce the impression that streets give way to private front gardens, instead softening the transition from public to private realm. It is important, therefore, to create a suitable variety in the way houses address the streets, with off street, on-street and courtyard parking areas.

Only where the largest, low density housing is proposed will housing be screened from the public realm with tree and hedge planting.

On-street Parking

Some of the housing will utilise on-street parking, in line with Designing Streets. This will be located as close as possible to the housing it serves and will be laid out in a safe and convenient manner, with low traffic speeds and pedestrian and cycle safety of key importance. Designing Streets also give rise to the need to provide more delineated visitor parking, as informal on-street parking is less readily available. This assists with the prioritisation of pedestrians and cyclists in shared areas.

All on-street parking areas will be open and overlooked by housing to ensure security.

Privacy

Detached, semi-detached and terraced housing will enjoy private gardens laid out to the rear of the houses, with appropriate screen fencing or planting to ensure privacy. Traditionally accepted distances from windows to common boundaries, and windows to windows will be employed (18 metres from window to window of habitable rooms a typically adopted rule).

In very low density areas, housing will be laid out with enclosed private front and rear gardens, but these areas will be kept to a minimum, on the northern edge of the development, where the additional boundary planting will also help to soften the visual impact on the edge of the town.

Sunlight and Daylight

Layouts will ensure that appropriate amounts of sunlight will reach each curtilage and that adequate daylighting levels will reach all habitable rooms. Opportunities for passive solar gain will be utilised wherever possible.

Plot Boundaries

Front garden boundaries will generally be un-defined. Where this is not appropriate, no more than a very low fence or wall will be used. Rear gardens may be separated by stone walls, post and wire or vertically lined timber fences, not exceeding 1.8m in height. Boundaries may also be defined with hedging, using native species, but the use of rapid growing conifers such as leylandii will not be permitted.

On the periphery of the site, particularly where the site bounds the Local Nature Conservation Site, boundaries will be marked only with hedges, post and wire fencing or dry stone dykes. Landscaping plans will accompany planning applications for individual phases, and householders purchasing plots that sit on the periphery of the site shall not remove boundary planting without express permission from North Banchory Company.

Garages and sheds

Sheds and detached garages shall have pitched roofs and be finished in materials consistent with the housing. No sheds or garages, built as a later addition to a house, shall project in front of the building line.

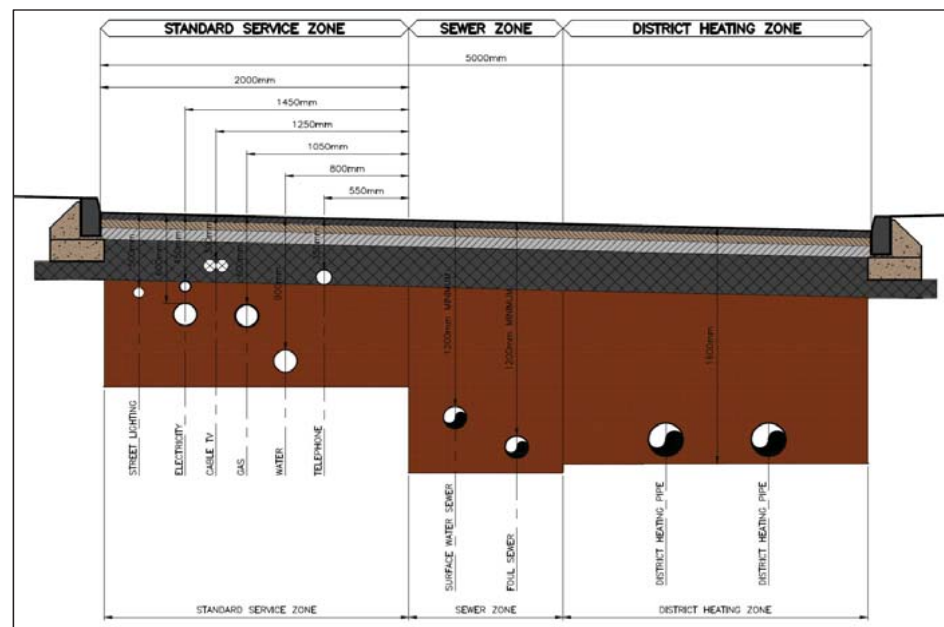
Services/District Heating

Housing within the OP2 site will be connected to the HoBEsco district heating network, with heating and hot water provided from the central biomass fuelled energy centre. Houses will include a heat exchanger in place of a traditional gas boiler, providing heat and hot water from a sustainable source. The OP3 site is outwith the catchment for the biomass district heating network, but will be designed to achieve the Council's energy efficiency targets by other means.

Housing will be designed to meet the appropriate Building Standards and Planning requirements for sustainability. Although not provided by the developer, the use of additional Low and Zero Carbon Technologies will be welcomed, with the exception of domestic wind turbines, due to their visual impact.

TV aerials shall be kept to an absolute minimum, with aerials located internally where possible, and satellite dishes kept away from the front elevation of the house unless otherwise agreed by North Banchory Company.

All other services will be provided and routed via roadways and public open space.



Typical section through roadway with services including district heating network.

F. House Envelope Design

General

Since the previous Design Guide for Hill of Banchory, many of the fundamental issues are now covered specifically in the Planning and Building Standards. There is therefore no necessity for this guide to cover matters such as space standards and sound insulation. Instead, this guide aims to provide a set of general rules to ensure that housing is of an appropriate design and appearance, and that such a standard is also employed on house extensions, garages and other buildings.

The design, scale and proportions of houses will reflect the regional and local architectural character. This can be achieved through the careful design and detailing of buildings and the use of materials which are sympathetic in colour and texture to the local vernacular tradition. To give Lochside of Leys an individual identity, however, the introduction of more contemporary detailing, within a traditional form, will be incorporated.



Typical street scene from phase 1a

There will therefore be a presumption against housing, house extensions and other domestic buildings that do not meet the following criteria: -

- a) Roofs
 - Minimum pitch of 30 degrees.
 - Maximum pitch of 45 degrees.
 - Dark coloured tiles or slate finish unless otherwise agreed.
 - Rainwater goods to be of traditional appearance.
- b) Wall finishes
 - The use of sympathetic materials and finishes to reinforce local identity will be reflected. These will include: granite masonry or high quality synthetic stonework, traditional harling or roughcast using granite chip drydash, and timber linings.
- c) Timber/uPVC details
 - To be coloured white unless explicitly agreed otherwise.
- d) Windows/doors
 - Windows to have a strong vertical emphasis, and frames and astragals to be painted white unless explicitly agreed otherwise.
 - Doors/garage doors to be coloured as selected for each distinct area.

The requirement to adhere to all design criteria will be included in the missives of sale.

G. Community/Commercial Development

General

The proposed development will incorporate elements of commercial and community development, and these should contribute positively to the architectural character of the area. However, such buildings may benefit from a more contemporary architectural approach, and should be considered on their own merits. However, the general principles of scale and proportion that are key to the local vernacular should be at the forefront of the design methodology. Examples of recent contemporary buildings with traditional proportions include the Banchory Christian Fellowship Church (below left) and Buchanan's Bistro (below right).



Commercial and community buildings should be designed to the highest standards of energy efficiency, and utilise the District Heating Network, unless otherwise agreed with North Banchory Company.

H. Business/Industrial Development

General

The business and industrial land at Hill of Banchory remains to be completed. Around 2 hectares of additional business/industrial land is included in the Lochside of Leys masterplan area, to the northeast (immediately north of Banchory Business Centre). There should be significant landscaping within the development of business and industrial land, to reduce the visual impact of development and create a pleasant working environment, particularly for office-based development.

Storage and Distribution

Storage and distribution uses will be permissible only where appropriate landscaping is included in the layout of the site, and materials are not stored at excessive height. This will ensure that the overall character and amenity of the Lochside of Leys development is not compromised by inappropriate visual impact from individual uses.

5 Procedural Requirements



Banchory Business Centre

5 Procedural Requirements

5.1 Community Engagement

Community Engagement to Date

- Following the submission of a Proposal of Application Notice for the masterplan site, a public exhibition was held in the Banchory Business Centre on the 22nd and 23rd November 2012.
- Following the exhibition, NBC presented the initial outcomes of it to the Community Council on the 10th December 2012.
- The masterplan was submitted, and subsequently approved in 2015 and an application for Planning Permission in Principle submitted.
- Planning Permission in Principle was granted in 2018
- A voluntary exhibition was held to seek views on the alternative distributor road solution on the 7th February 2019.
- An application for Full Planning Permission was submitted for this road, and subsequently withdrawn following discussions with Planning and Roads officers.
- An exhibition was held to explain the proposed amendment to the masterplan to omit a distributor road. This was held on 28th October 2019.
- A presentation to the Banchory Community Council was made on the 11th November 2019.
- A report of the consultation feedback is appended in section 6.

5.2 Developer Obligations

Developer Obligations have been agreed for the whole development site through the PPIP process and secured by means of a section 75 agreement. These include contributions towards community facilities, primary school provision and healthcare.

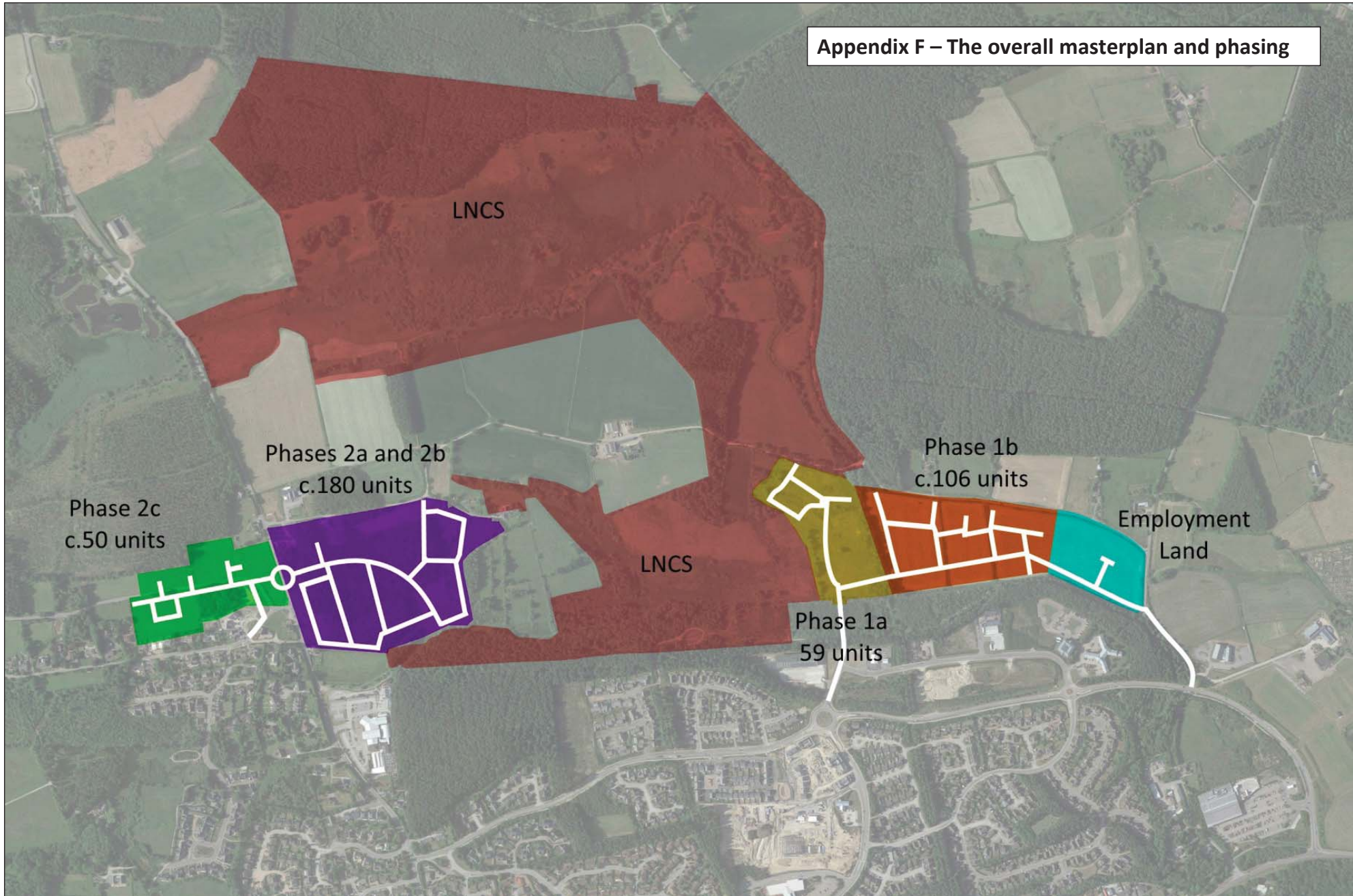
6 Appendices



6 Appendices

- A Transport Assessment**
- B Exhibition Boards (2019)**
- C Report of Consultation**
- D Sample Landscape Proposals for Phase 1a**
- E Drainage Proposals Strategy Report**
- F Phasing Diagram**
- G Potential Future Core Road Link**

Appendix F – The overall masterplan and phasing



Appendix G – Potential Future Core Road Link

The Transport Assessment that supports this masterplan is based upon the development of the housing allocated in the current Local Development Plan. However, if for any reason this changes in time, or more land is allocated, a link road may be justifiable in the future between phases 1 and 2. In order to futureproof for this eventuality, the Core Road networks within phase 1b and 2a/2b should be designed in such a way that such a link can be delivered without hindrance. The plan below demonstrates indicatively where such a link could tie in with the current masterplan, thereby demonstrating where core road should end within the development.

