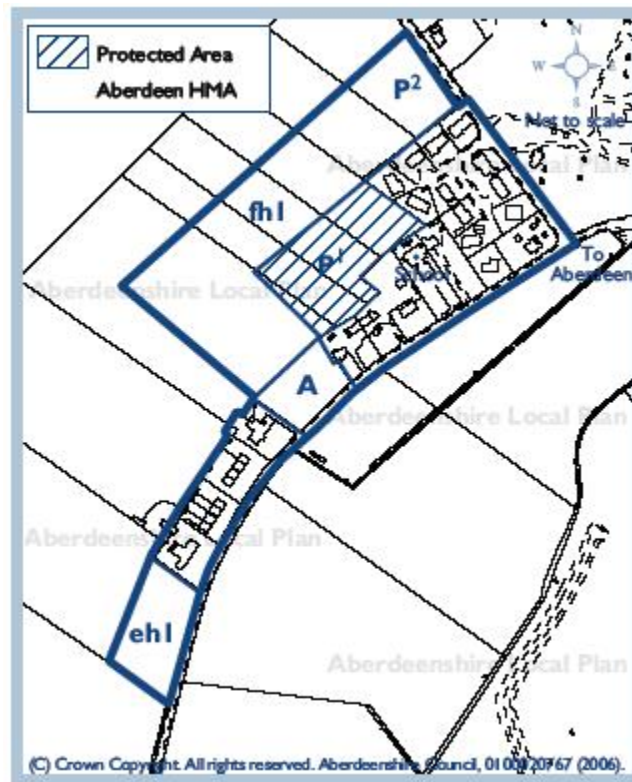


DEVELOPMENT BRIEF for RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT at WOODLANDS CROFT, WOODLANDS OF DURRIS



Developers must have regard to the contents of this Brief in preparing their scheme. Where differences do occur, justification by the developer is required.

April 2007

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



1. PURPOSE

1.1 *Type of development preferred*

The brief is to ensure that the residential development at the site to the rear of Woodside Crofts at Woodlands of Durriss is well integrated and serviced, appropriate to their surroundings and make a positive contribution to the area. The provision of a multi use open space for the settlement is seen as essential. This brief will aim to provide a basis for a high quality development on this site.

1.2 *Constraints and limitations*

The landscape setting of the sites and the character of the existing settlement are important considerations due to the location within an Area of Landscape Significance. The development should respect the existing landscape of Woodlands of Durriss whilst enhancing the quality of the environment in Woodlands of Durriss. Wastewater treatment issues must be resolved prior to the development of the site.

1.3 *Relevant Development Plan Policies*

The site has been identified within the Aberdeenshire Local Plan as Site fh1, suitable for around 20 houses. The site is adjacent to a protected area 'project area' shown as P1 (playing fields/public open space for general recreational use). In addition 'project area' P2 is shown for strategic landscaping to the north east of the housing allocation. Future housing allocations, including site fh1 at Woodlands of Durriss, were released by the Supplementary Planning Guidance "Housing Land Release 2006 –2010".

A number of relevant development plans policies shall have to be satisfied, including:

North East Scotland Together (NEST)

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Policy 9 | Housing Allocations Jan 2006 – Dec 2010 |
| Policy 11 | General Housing Allocations |
| Policy 13 | Developer Contributions |
| Policy 14 | Affordable and Special Needs Housing |
| Policy 16 | Sports and Recreation Facilities |

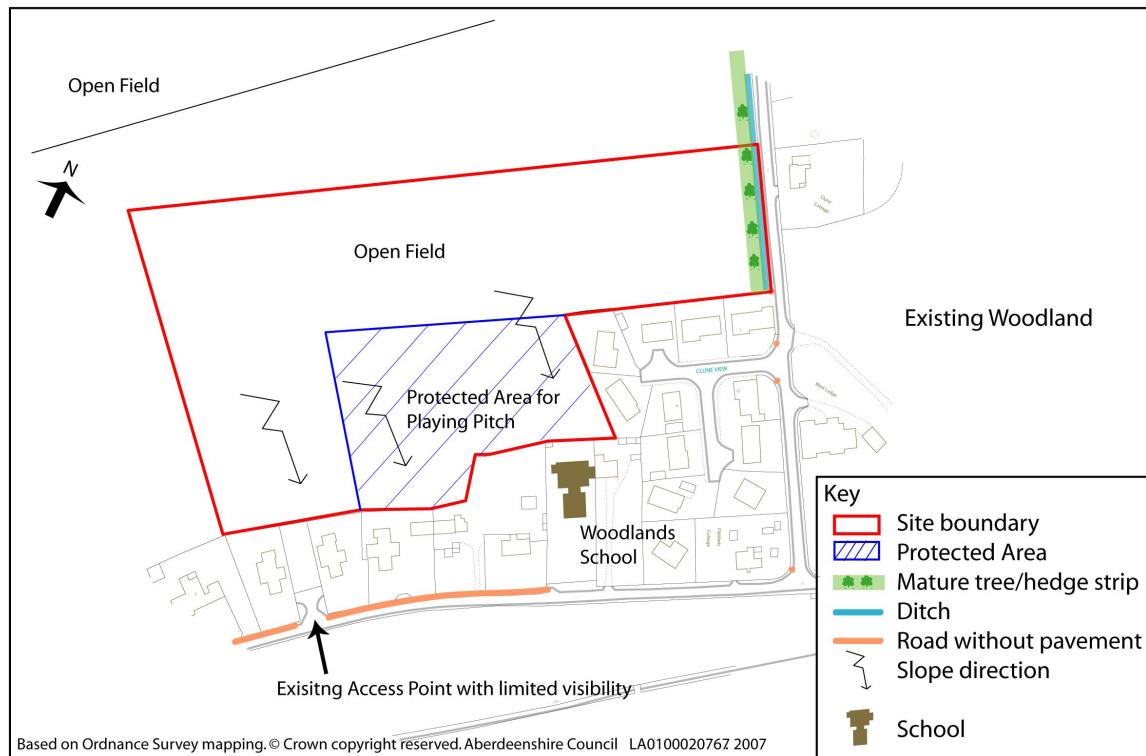
Policy 17 Countryside & Open Space Access
Policy 21 Design

Aberdeenshire Local Plan (ALP)

Policy Env\5A Areas of Landscape Significance
Policy Env\22 Public Access
Policy Hou\2 Future Housing Land Allocations 2006-2010
Policy Hou\8 Affordable Housing
Policy Hou\13 Public Open Space for Housing
Policy Emp\1 Allocated and Existing Employment Land
Policy Inf\1 Roads and Access
Policy Inf\4a Foul Drainage Standards
Policy Inf\4b Surface Water Drainage Standards: Sustainable Urban Drainage
Systems
Policy Gen\1 Sustainability Principles
Policy Gen\2 The Layout, Sitting and Design of New Development in
Aberdeenshire
Policy Gen\3 Developer Contributions
Policy Gen\5 Landscaping Standards
Policy Gen\12 Project area

2.0 SITE ANALYSIS

Figure 1: Site Analysis



A site analysis has been undertaken to identify the site's main features and constraints. The following is not an exhaustive site description, but a list of the key issues that lead to the site requirements in the next section.

2.1 Location and Landscape Context

- The site is located to the north west of the existing settlement. It occupies fields that contain the Aberdeenshire Local Plan sites fh1 and protected area defined as 'project area' P1. The area is characterised by the surrounding rounded hills and the shallow valley both of which contain a high proportion of woodland.
- The north and west of the site are open fields with views towards Woodlands Wood.
- The settlement of Woodlands of Durriss lies to the south and east of the site. Woodlands of Durriss itself is a small, mainly linear settlement set in an attractive landscape setting.
- To the north east the site is bounded for a short distance by the minor road serving Woodlands of Durriss. This road connects to the B9077

more commonly known as the South Deeside road. The minor road is lined with mature trees, scrubs and a beech hedgerow that form part of the site indicated as P2. Beyond the road lies the woodlands leading towards Durris Burn.

- The site slopes in a southeasterly direction with the steepest slopes to the southeast of the site. Beyond the site the land rises gently to the north.
- The site presents a large addition to a small settlement and will require to be carefully integrated with the existing settlement.
- The site lies within a local landscape designation known as an Area of Landscape Significance. Within these areas development should not detract from the quality or character of the landscape either in part or whole.

2.2 Climatic Considerations

- The landforms and woodlands provide generally good protection from prevailing winds to the north and east. However the site is more exposed to the west.
- Due to the sites southeasterly aspect it will benefit from the sun during the summer.

2.3 Potential Hazards

- There are no known contaminants or noise affecting the site.
- The land has had a history of drainage problems.

2.4 Ecological Considerations

- In general, the field designated as Site fh1 in ALP and the protected area have been farmland for some time and do not contain any great biodiversity.
- A small strip of established trees and hedgerow line the minor road bounding the north east of the site.

- The Burn of Durriss is a tributary of the River Dee and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). All solutions to waste water and drainage must not result in an adverse impact on the qualifying interests of the site.
- A ditch with running water follows the boundary of the road to the north east of the site within the mature belt of trees and hedgerow.

2.5 ***Built and Social Context***

- The settlement has grown from a small group of houses and the school building. The older units are stone built and display the traditional vernacular of this part of Deeside. Some of the housing is terraced and dates from growth of the forestry industry. The existing settlement contains a variety of styles with a high proportion of more recent housing. Some of this housing display's element of traditional design whilst others around Clune View bear little in the way of traditional design features. Building height is generally under two storeys. The majority of development presents a south-facing frontage onto the minor road.
- Durriss Primary School forms the largest of the buildings and adjoins the site and the building and forms the current focal point of Woodlands of Durriss.
- The site is not noted of being of any outstanding archaeological interest.
- The project area shown as P1 is a protected area and development will be required to respect its boundaries. Development of this area of open space integral to improve facilities for Woodlands of Durriss and its school, which has no formal, recreational public open space.

2.6 ***Access***

- There are no established rights of way across the site.
- There are no existing roads on the site itself.
- An access wayleave exists to the south through the site designated as Site A in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan. This site contains two relatively new dwellings either side of this wayleave. Visibility would

need to be improved at this access point before it meets the Council Standards.

- A minor road to Kirkton of Durriruns adjacent to the boundary of the site to the northeast. Visual requirements would mean vehicular access from this road could only be provided with the removal of some of the mature tree and hedge strip.
- Junctions on to the South Deeside Road from the north and east are not ideal and improvements may need to be considered.
- There is currently no public bus service; the nearest bus stop is at Kirkton of Durris from where a service to Aberdeen and Banchory is run by Stagecoach Bluebird.
- A drop of point for the school bus exists at the south of the school.
- The main roads through Woodlands of Durris have limited pavements.

2.7 Utilities

- A water supply is available at this site.
- Scottish Water have confirmed that foul drainage from this development cannot be accommodated within the present wastewater treatment plant at Woodlands of Durris.
- A suitable Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) will need to be considered at an early stage. Surface water will need to be dealt with in a sustainable manner.

2.8 Other Considerations

- The sites received several objections, which were heard at the Local Plan Inquiry. The allocation at Woodlands of Durris was retained in order to assist with the provision of community facilities within the settlement.
- As a result of the Local Plan Inquiry figures given for housing allocations are indicative.
- The area covered by the brief is owned by Dunecht Estates.
- The primary school is below standard in terms of the school site and playing field area and there is an argument to upgrade the suitability and condition of the school in this respect. Development of the

protected area adjacent to the school could substantially improve the situation. Whilst the increase in pupils associated with this development is unlikely to give rise to school capacity problems it will further degrade the condition of the schools facilities if improvements are not made. A seven a side pitch or similar facility would have benefits for the school if designed should be considered in the area of open space to help alleviate the situation. The Durris School Board has requested additional car park for the school. It may be possible to integrate this into the development.

Secondary education can be provided in Banchory although the school is already oversubscribed.

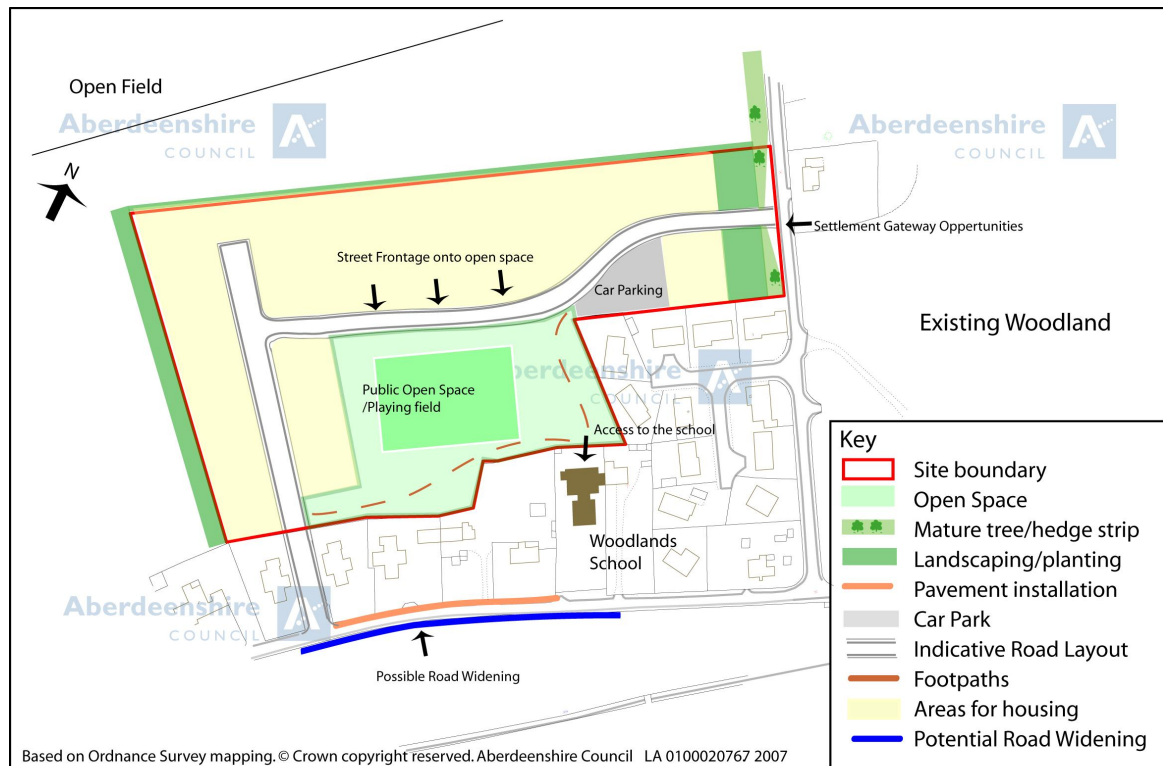
2.9 Conclusion

- Opportunities exist for new community facilities including for the school and settlement. It is envisaged that more than 20 units could be accommodated on the site. However the sites development would present a significant addition to the settlement and the local community are concerned about the extent of the housing development. It is therefore reasonable to limit the number of houses at the site to a maximum of 20 units consistent with the Local Plan Allocation.
- Given the large addition to the settlement and the Area of Landscape Significance status it will be important that any development would be required to provide a high quality, coherent layout with a high standard of landscaping and design that is sympathetic to the situation.
- Development must take account of the need to provide the open space shown as a protected area in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan. The development of multi use areas would provide a valuable resource for the school and community. As part of a multi use space, a seven a side pitch or similar facility would benefit the school and provide recreational opportunities for residents. The ground is sloping and work would be required to provide an adequate playing surface.
- Access solutions, which are to the satisfaction of the Council will be required prior to the approval of the proposal.

- There are drainage constraints that may require investment by the developer. A suitable arrangement will need to be found in regards to the treatment of wastewater from this development.

3.0 SITE REQUIREMENTS

Figure 2: Site Requirements



The site requirements are shown in illustrated form above and provide a suggestion as to how the site could be developed to meet the requirements contained within this brief.

3.1 **General**

3.1.1 **Index 21**

- Development of the site’s layout should reflect the approach set out by the 5 Indicators listed in “Index 21” *

***Note** Index 21 is a method of assessment that essentially does two things: it identifies a set of key issues that affect the “environment-friendliness” of housing layouts; and integrates them in a framework that gives each element its proper status. It is based on the assessment of five Indicators: climate, energy, resources, biodiversity and social aspects.

Crucially it has developed as a *process* by which the quality of layouts can be assessed rather than as a *prescriptive* guide to good and bad ones. However, this development brief also identifies some aspects from Index 21 that will be crucial for this particular site in any circumstances. For more detail see the website at www.index21.org.uk.

The Aberdeenshire Council Sustainability Charter outlines the commitment of the Council to the principles of sustainability, including minimising the use of non-renewable resources. The Council produced a Renewable Energy Strategy in 2004 which furthers this aim.

3.1.2 ***On Site Renewable Provision***

A substantial amount of everyday energy use should be derived from microrenewables. The Scottish Ministers have set a target of generating 40% of Scotland's electricity from renewable sources by 2020 (SPP6). In the meantime this target remains aspirational, but given the continuing improvement in insulating materials and building techniques, progress towards 40% is perfectly realistic.

A statement on the methods proposed to minimise energy use and on renewable energy technologies considered must be submitted with the proposals, and justified reasons given for any rejected. A series of flowcharts is attached to aid this consideration (Appendix 2). The advice of 'SCARF' may also be useful in this respect and any available grants can be discussed with them.

The Renewable Energy Strategy committed the Council to producing additional guidance to the Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan policies Inf7 (Renewable Energy Facilities – Wind farms) and Inf8 (Other Renewable Energy Sources). As a result of its Action Plan three supplementary planning guidance notes have been produced (Use of Wind Energy -, Biomass -, Micro-renewables -, in Aberdeenshire) to add clarity to the use of these policies, and should be referred to for more detailed information. This site has the potential for various forms of renewable energy and developers should take the chance to incorporate

such sources as may be appropriate at an early stage in the design and siting of housing.

3.2 Layout

3.2.1 Response to Climate

- Solar orientation – the site is generally southeast facing with the potential to capitalize on solar radiation and maximize heating gain. The design and siting of buildings should therefore ensure this potential is fully exploited and any south facing aspects are not overshadowed.
- Wind chill – the presence or absence of wind may have a greater impact than solar gain in the heating of buildings, particularly during colder months. The development should use shelterbelts where possible to mitigate wind-chill. This is suggested to the west of the development.

3.2.2 Energy Efficiency/Environmental Friendliness/Resource Efficiency

- High insulation standards and energy conserving methods should be used in this development. This can help achieve sustainability aims. In addition the developer must seek to provide a proportion of the required energy needs of the development through renewable onsite sources (see section 3.1.2).
- Developers should have respect to the Pollution Prevention Guidance (PPG) published by SEPA and in particular PPG 6 'Working at Construction and Demolition Sites'.

3.2.3 Biodiversity, Open Space and Sense of Place

- A “sense of place” can be generated by good design but also by the creation of purposeful, accessible and well designed open space that complement the landscape setting. A band of structure planting will be required to the west of the development site (as shown on figure 2). This will limit any visual impact of the development and provide a backdrop of trees, which will help integrate the development into the landscape but would also help to enhance the sites biodiversity and

nature Conservation value. The strip should be at least 10 meters in width and planted with suitable mixed broadleaves and conifers of a variety which are unlikely to cause problems in the future for the proposed residential development. This strip could be provided outside the site boundary. A green edge to the development should also be provided to the north to soften the impact of the development.

- Boundaries should be in keeping with the rural location and where possible be formed by hedgerow or dry stone dykes rather than high fencing.
- Area P2 should be appropriately planted to complement the existing tree belt. As this would effectively form a main entrance settlement there is an opportunity to form an attractive gateway to Woodlands of Durris. A gateway feature\’s such as a sign should be considered at this location.
- Open space provision should be considered with the needs of the community in mind. Open space should be provided in line with the protected area shown as P1. The provision of this space is an opportunity to improve both facilities for the community and an upgrading of the schools condition through the provision of a suitable multi use open space and playing pitch. A seven-a-side pitch designed to national minimum standards should be considered within P1. A seven-a-side pitch will generally be 60/50 metres in length and 40/30 metres wide. Sportscotland and the Council’s Education and Recreation department should be contacted for further information.
- A play area should be considered close to the school as part of this open space.
- The open space must be overlooked by the new development wherever possible for security purposes. Street frontage onto open space can often be important in creating a sense of place and security. Appropriate planting should be considered within the open space. This could help soften visual impacts of the development. Ideally the space will form a small park like facility and design must be carefully considered to ensure that it can be safely utilised by the school and residents.

3.2.4 Distribution of Land Uses

- The majority of site fh1 will be utilised for residential development. The protected area P1 should be used for the open space outlined in paragraph 3.2.4.

3.3 Access

3.3.1 Footpaths & Cycleway

- Pedestrian access should be provided through the open space to the school from the car park and the recycling centre. This route should be sufficiently lit. Access to the school will be required from the north.
- A pavement would be desirable on the main road through Woodlands of Durris to the south of the site between the proposed access road and the School.
- Consideration should be given to providing links into the surrounding countryside including through the planted strips around the site.

3.3.2 Road Access

- It is the preference of the council that accesses are provided from the south of the development and the northeast. A through route with an appropriately placed car park should help reduce congestion on the minor road to the south of the school. It will also allow satisfactory access for service vehicles. Vehicular access to the site from the northeast is theoretically possible and would require the removal of some of the existing mature tree strip both inside and outside the site to provide the necessary visibility strip. Planting in area P2 will help mitigate any loss of trees at this location. Road accesses will only be permitted where they adhere to the Council's standards.
- Road access to site should be considered from the south by utilising the existing hammerhead. Even so the existing access of the road will require upgrading with a junction bellmouth and footways. Fencing and hedges currently obscures visibility splays and a solution will be required to this problem. The road from the junction to the school may

require widening to allow the provision of a pavement and sufficient visibility (4.5 by 90 metres) to be achieved. If visibility can be achieved without road widening a pavement could be considered on the other side of the road.

- Consideration will need to be given to the junctions onto South Deeside Road to the north of the settlement and to the east.

3.3.3 General Road Layouts

- All roads within the site shall be designed in accordance with the Council's Standards for Road Construction and Consent requirements of the Roads Authority. A 'home zone' approach should be strongly considered by the developer.
- Street lighting will need to be extended to serve the site and any accesses to the site which are outwith the present street lighting.

3.3.4 Traffic Calming

- Traffic calming will be employed as requested by the Roads Authority for shared pedestrian and vehicular traffic access roads.

3.3.5 Public Transport Needs

- Woodlands of Durriss is not served by a regular public bus. Stagecoach are considering the possibility of rerouting the 204 service by Woodlands of Durriss.

3.3.6 Emergency & Service Access

- All emergency and service accesses, including the removal of waste, will be accommodated by the internal access roads to be constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Officer and the Roads Authority.

3.3.7 Access for All

- Disabled access must be considered when designing all aspects of the development.

3.3.8 **Parking**

- Given the need to provide adequate dedicated car parking for the teachers and parents at the school it would be pertinent to provide this on the site within a reasonable distance of the school and combined with general parking for the open space. A short footpath would then link the school with the car parking. An indicative location is shown on figure 2. This would relieve congestion caused by car parking on the road to the south of the school.
- Parking for the school and open space must be appropriate in siting, nature and scale. The Councils maximum car parking standards will apply.

3.3.9 **Other Access**

- There must be appropriate connections between the site and the surrounding village.

3.3.10 **Phasing**

- It is not considered that phasing will be required for this development.

3.4 ***Infrastructure & Other Services***

3.4.1 **Drainage**

- A new wastewater treatment plant will be required to accommodate the wastewater from this development. A separate planning application will be required for a wastewater plant which meets with the approval of Aberdeenshire Council, SEPA and Scottish Water. A new wastewater treatment plant would require to be a minimum of 90 metres from the nearest residential dwelling. Scottish Water are currently funded to remove constraints on all water and sewage treatment works between now and 2014. Scottish Water has yet to confirm when they plan to upgrade the facilities at Woodlands of Durriss.
- A treatment plant will discharge into a tributary of the River Dee. The Dee and its tributaries are classed as a freshwater SAC, and the proposal is likely to increase discharge to the river. Scottish Natural Heritage will need to be informed to determine whether this

development is likely to have a significant impact on the River Dee SAC. Additional surveys and information may be required to inform any decision as to whether the development is likely to have a significant impact on the conservation interests of the SAC and hence inform whether a more detailed appropriate assessment of the proposal is required.

- All surface water drainage will be managed through SuDS to the approval of SEPA, Scottish Water and Aberdeenshire Council. SuDS should be designed in accordance with good practise in line with Planning Advice Note 61 (PAN61) “Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems” and the technical guidance within the “SuDS Design Manual for Scotland and Northern Ireland” published by CIRIA, 2000 and PAN 61. It is important that SuDS are considered at the initial design stage, especially given past drainage issues at this site.
- Well-designed SUDS can help promote biodiversity and provide an attractive feature within a development.
- A Drainage Impact Assessment will be required.

3.4.2 Supply & Distribution of Water

- All water will be supplied from a public water main as identified by Scottish Water. Scottish Water should be consulted in this regard.

3.4.3 Supply & Distribution of Electricity

- Electricity can be supplied on site; the developer should contact the service provider in this respect.

3.4.4 Education Facilities

- Education provision can be provided at Durriss School and Secondary school provision in Banchory. Banchory Academy is currently over capacity and developer contributions are likely to be required for this element. Durriss Primary requires measures to improve the condition of the schools facilities.

3.4.5 Community Facilities

- There is no further requirement for on-site community facilities to be provided on site other than the those outlined in the brief including open space, car parking, pedestrian links outlined within the brief.

3.4.6 Maintenance

- It is expected that the Local Authority will adopt landscaped areas and open spaces. Agreement will be required with the Council's Landscape Services Section of the T&I Service regarding the design and long-term maintenance of any paths, landscaped areas and open spaces.

3.5 *Design*

3.5.1 Building Heights

- Building height will be required to reflect that of the neighbouring properties and the settlement in general. Therefore only buildings under two storeys will be acceptable at this site.

3.5.2 Housing & Space Standards

- The houses on the site will need to meet current standards on private space.
- A mix of housing types is required as to provide for a variety of needs and circumstances. This includes considering terracing, semi detached and detached housing in order to provide an appropriate extension to the settlement.

3.5.3 Design Details

- In view of the location there is an opportunity to create a development that will provide a sympathetic addition to the settlement. Every care must be taken to ensure that both the layout and design are of the highest standards and reflects the best local characteristics of the area.
- Materials used should be consistent with those typically found in the area.
- The layout of the housing in an L shape reflects the current L shape formed by the existing settlement but provides a new form for the

settlement creating a focal point for the settlement around the open space. It is therefore essential that buildings are designed and sited to enhance this feature.

- Affordable housing should be consistent with that of surrounding housing in terms of design and materials. This will avoid stigmatisation and improve social cohesion.
- The approach laid down in the Scottish Executives Policy on architecture, *Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland* should be observed. As previously discussed, energy efficient, low maintenance and sustainable materials should be given priority and adopted wherever practical.

3.6 Developer Contributions

3.6.1 Infrastructure/Service Contributions

- It is anticipated that the developer will may be required to contribute to secondary education provision and other infrastructure demands resulting from the development.
- It will be important for this development to benefit the Durris School by providing appropriate contribution towards improved recreational space and car parking provision.
- Any additional contributions may be in kind or financial but will require to be agreed with the Local Authority prior to the grant of planning permission for housing.

3.6.2 Affordable Housing

- There will be a requirement for affordable houses to be provided. There is a robust housing market in the Durris area suggesting the inclusion of affordable housing on site. Currently the requirement for new development is for 25% of new housing to be affordable. Affordable housing will be subject of an agreement prior to the granting of planning permission for housing and will include more detailed discussions on tenure and house size at the detailed planning stage.

4.0 FURTHER ADVICE

Developers are urged to contact the Planning Service of Aberdeenshire Council at the earliest opportunity to discuss details of any submission before a formal application for planning consent is lodged. Any application will be dealt with primarily by the Kincardine and Mearns Area Development Control Team, based at the following address:

Planning & Building Standards

Viewmount,

Arduthie Road,

Stonehaven, AB39 2DQ

Tel: 01569 768300

Fax: 01569 766549

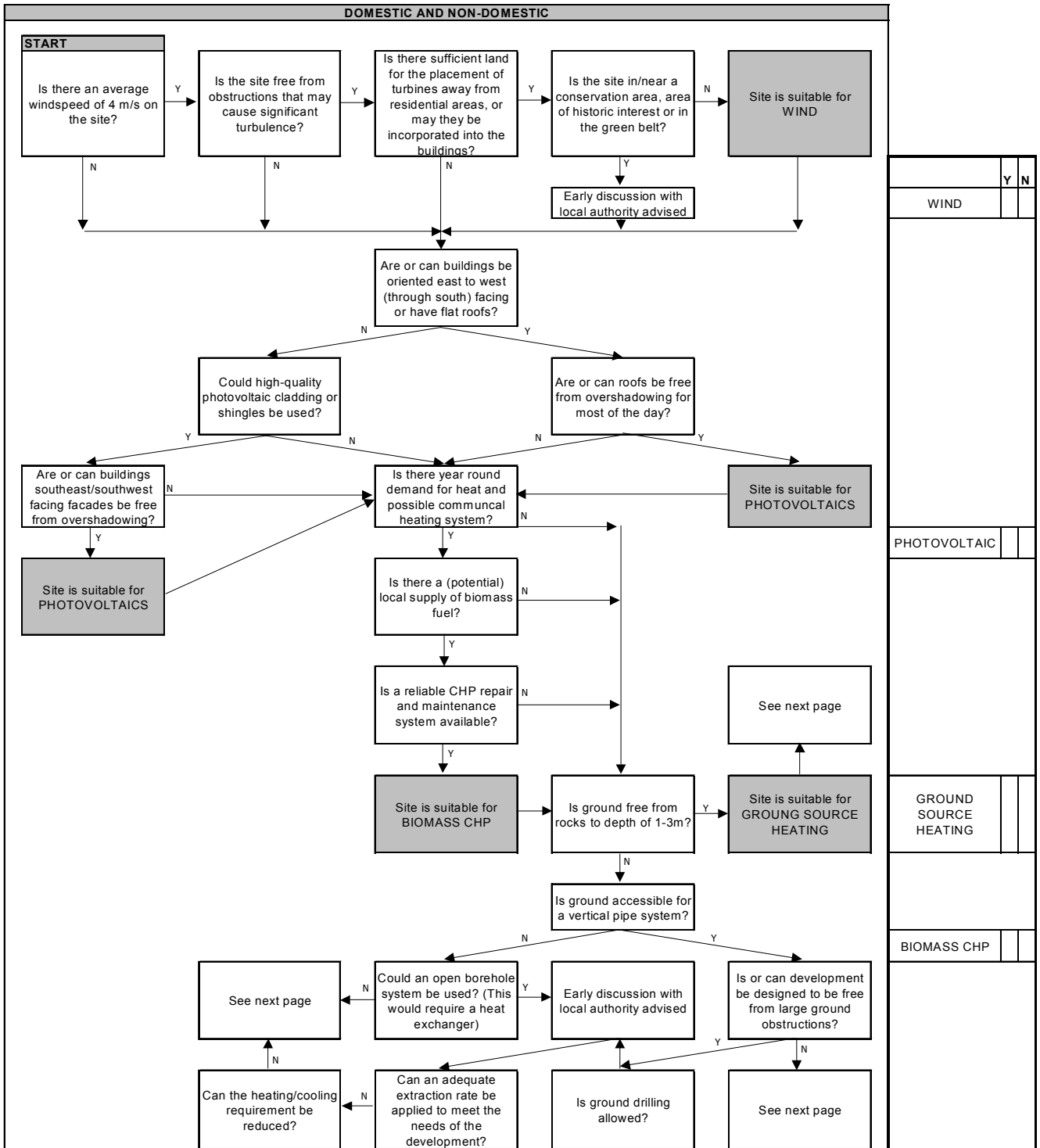
Other useful contacts:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Transportation & Roads Service | 01467 620 981 |
|--------------------------------|---------------|

| | |
|------|---------------|
| SEPA | 01224 248 338 |
|------|---------------|

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Scottish Water | 01224 655 000 |
|----------------|---------------|

Appendix 1. Renewable Energy Flowcharts



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The flowchart below has been designed to lead you through various types of renewable energy technologies. By answering these questions, potentially suitable sources of renewable energy will be identified.
2. Start at the top left corner ('START') and answer the questions as 'yes' or 'no' and follow the appropriate arrow.
3. The columns on the right should be used for your reference to highlight technologies that should be examined further.
4. The first page highlights energy sources that are relevant to houses, flats and other developments, such as retail or industrial and should always
5. The second page is split between domestic and non-domestic i.e. houses/flats and other developments. You may need to consider the charts more than once depending on your proposal (e.g. a mixed-use development of houses, flats and retail will need to consider the charts for each use
6. These energy sources should then be discussed in a statement submitted as part of the proposal outlining which sources are to be incorporated in a development, or why they have been rejected.

