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1 Vision

View of Scolty Hill looking South across the masterplan area

~ 3 ~
1 Vision

The Hill of Banchory (HoB) has been developed over the last decade, providing a range of housing and services in an attractive setting. At the time of the Local Development Plan review beginning in 2009, only the latter stages of the development identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan remained to be built.

Through the Local Development Plan review, the local desire to see a site reserved for a future replacement secondary school was strong, and North Banchory Company (NBC) agreed with the local community that the remaining land identified for development at HoB was the most suitable location for this. With NBC’s agreement to reserve this remaining housing land for a future school, the housing element of Hill of Banchory is now effectively complete, with the final phase of 30 dwellings now built.

Aberdeenshire Council considered several options for the future growth of Banchory, to the west of the town, to the south, as well as to the north. However, the decision to extend the settlement north of Hill of Banchory towards the Loch of Leys was the logical one, with services readily available, and the landscape capable of absorbing further growth. The road running into the area also provided a recognisable boundary to the expansion area.

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 2012. Through the development of Hill of Banchory, a principle 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. However, changing from being an established commuter town is always difficult to address, because residents do not automatically change jobs overnight to work closer to home. It is often the next generation after the rapid growth of a town that seek employment in the town. A shift towards smaller houses will better serve the changing population demographic rather than the affluent commuter market.

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.

The Local Development Plan also envisaged that the road running through the site could be improved over time to form a further opportunity to divert traffic from the town centre.

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 opportunities must be delivered 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.
- Measures are required to address the services that are stretched in the town, such as health care and leisure facilities.
- 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 requirements 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 been 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.
View west from the Hirn Road across the M2 site.

Fig 1 – Concept Plan
2 Context
2 Context

The Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2006

Banchory has expanded at a constant pace over several decades, and the most recent element of the growth has been at Hill of Banchory. Started 10 years ago, the development of Hill of Banchory has delivered around 50 houses per year. The allocations for development in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan reflected the remaining land previously allocated for development. Fig 2 below shows the allocations. Site A was to deliver 50 houses, while sites fh1 and fh2 were to deliver a further 200 houses.

The development of site A is now complete, and work has commenced on site fh1, where only 30 houses will be built on the eastern part of this site, with the remainder of sites fh1 and fh2 to be reserved for education uses.

The Aberdeenshire Local Plan identifies Banchory having a high demand for housing, but limited potential for expansion due to physical and natural features. To the south lies the River Dee, to the east Crathes Castle, to the west Inchmarlo Golf Course, and to the northwest large areas of attractive woodland. This woodland is controlled by the Forestry Commission, and their restocking proposals for the area indicate a continuation of tree cover over large areas, along with diversification to broadleaf and native species. This is shown in the restocking proposals plan (fig 3) below.

Expansion into the Hill of Banchory commercial woodland was therefore considered the logical direction for growth.

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.

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 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 new 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

The Local Development Plan identifies 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 4 below.

Fig 4 – Local Development Plan proposals map for Banchory

The Local Development Plan supplementary guidance for Banchory identifies requirements for settlement infrastructure, and specifies 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 specific development allocations are identified as follows: -

- Site H1 is allocated for up to 15 houses in the first phase.
- Site H2 is allocated for up to 50 houses in the second phase and will be subject to a masterplan.
- Site M1 is allocated for a mix of uses to include up to 30 houses in the first phase as a demonstration eco-village, tourism uses, and community uses including playing fields, one full size football pitch, and a park and ride facility.
- 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.
- The sites are located close to the River Dee SAC and the masterplan or planning application in respect of the allocated site will need to contain a construction method statement to take account of the potential impacts to the qualifying interests of the River Dee SAC.

This masterplan will address the allocations on sites M2 and H2 together, as an integrated approach provides a more comprehensive picture than treating both sites separately. In addition to the two development allocations, the following additional land zonings are of key importance to this masterplan.

- Site P7 is protected to conserve the landscape buffer.
- Site P9 is protected to conserve the Loch of Leys Local Nature Conservation Site.
- Site P10 is protected to conserve the area of woodland and amenity.
- Site R1 is reserved for community uses including a primary school.
- Site R2 is reserved for a cemetery.
- Site R3 is reserved for potential education facilities.
- Site BUS 1 and 2 are safeguarded for employment uses.

**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 overleaf.

The masterplan must address the identified infrastructure requirements and demonstrate the deliverability of the proposals.

**Affordable Housing**

A proportion of the housing allocated has been moved from the fh2 and fh3 sites in the former 2006 Aberdeenshire Local Plan. These areas formed the latter phases of the Hill of Banchory Development, but have now been replaced with the R3 designation – reserved for future educational uses.

The development of Hill of Banchory included a substantial quantity of affordable housing delivered at an early stage, and therefore the affordable contribution for the fh2 and fh3 sites have already been built. This therefore now relates to the first 56 houses on the M2 site.

Following the construction of the first 56 houses, affordable housing will be delivered in accordance with planning policy.

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**Notes:**

- Plan: Plan and implement the new material M & M.
- Design: Design the new theatre.
- Implementation: Implement the new material M & M.
- Monitoring: Monitor the new theatre implementation.
- Evaluation: Evaluate the performance of the new material M & M.

**Key Dates:**

- Plan: 1st March
- Design: 15th March
- Implementation: 1st April
- Monitoring: 15th April
- Evaluation: 1st May

**Budget:**

- Plan: £100,000
- Design: £50,000
- Implementation: £150,000
- Monitoring: £50,000
- Evaluation: £50,000

**Total Budget:** £400,000
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 5 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.

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 6 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.

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 H2 - 3.9 hectares
- Site M2 East - 15.4 hectares
- Site M2 West - 9.5 hectares
- Site R3 (educational use) – 9 hectares

Topography

As mentioned briefly in section 3.1, 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 his ridge, the land falls gently towards the Loch of Leys. However, the eastern part of M2 and most of site M1 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.

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.

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
The masterplan area contains little in the way of hedges or dykes marking field boundaries, except along the existing road line. The road will be realigned and widened, but the existing walls will be retained where possible. Outwith the masterplan, but within the adjacent Local Nature Conservation Site in particular, there is a greater 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 however 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 7 below shows the assessment plan, with several constraint layers overlaid to show the most and least favourable areas for development.

### 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 8 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.
Nature Conservation Designations

As identified above, the area splitting site M2 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 9 – Local Nature Conservation Site from the air.](image)

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.

The Leys Charitable Trust was formed in 2013 to provide maintenance and improvement of the Loch of Leys area. The Trust also has an advisory role in the management of adjacent land that is within the ownership of Leys Estate, but not specifically leased to the Trust. It is envisaged that the arrangement could be extended to include more of the LNCS area in, and discussions are encouraged between all parties in early course. Such an arrangement would ensure the long term management of land adjacent to, but not forming part of, the Lochside of Leys development.

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 10 below.

![Fig 10 – Watercourses and current foul drainage](image)

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 will require to make an assessment of the existing waste water network to determine if local improvements and are required. The masterplan will help to inform this assessment.

There is sufficient capacity at the Invercannie Water Treatment Works to serve the site, although some upgrade to the local pumping station may be required.

3.5 Flood Risk

The eastern part of the M2 site is identified as at risk of flooding on SEPA’s revised flood risk maps. The area is shown overleaf in Fig 11. 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.

A Flood Risk Assessment has therefore been carried out, and indeed identified issues with the existing network of watercourses in the area. Several field ditches feed into a watercourse that currently...
crosses the eastern part of site M2, to the east of the Burn O’Bennie. This includes surface water from the existing road, and ditches from the north of the site. The principle cause of recent flooding is the culvert where this ditch feeds into the Burn O’Bennie, which backs up and floods the fields adjacent, and also causes the Burn O’Bennie to back up. The development of the site, and the provision of the new distributor road require the re-routing of this ditch to the east, to run between the housing and employment land elements of the development, in a tree lined strip of open space (rather like the Burn O’Bennie to the west). The modelling work shows that this diversion, into an appropriately sized dual channel, alleviates the flood risk, as demonstrated in Fig 12 below (showing a 1:200 year flood event). The full flood risk assessment is appended to this report.

The alleviation of flood risk from the development area involves the re-routing of a number of watercourses, detailed in the Flood Risk Assessment documents. Should any realignment of watercourses constitute an engineering operation that would fall outwith the masterplan or Planning Permission in Principle site boundaries, a separate application for Full Planning Permission will be submitted.

### 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.

### 3.7 Services

#### Roads

The Aberdeenshire Local Plan identified the need for a new relief road to the north of Hill of Banchory in 2006, and this will, be provided as part of the masterplan. This will be done in the form of an upgrading of the existing road which runs from the Raemoir to the Hirn Road. This road will be extended to the east, to connect with the existing network at the Hill of Banchory East/Hirn Road junction. To the west, a new junction will be formed with Raemoir Road, to serve the areas both east and west of it. This will replace the existing access to Upper Lochton and the Crows Nest Civic Amenity site with a new roundabout, located further north. Existing concerns about visibility at the junction to Upper Lochton will therefore be resolved through the implementation of the masterplan.

The new relief road will follow as closely as possible the existing minor road, although a degree of realignment will be necessary to ensure appropriate radii at bends, and visibility at junctions. Fig 13 below shows the proposed new road layout (considered in more detail later in this report) marked in red, and the existing road marked in yellow. This road will be built to the appropriate standard for a distributor road. A connecting road will also be developed linking the distributor road to the central roundabout in Hill of Banchory (shown in blue below)

A detailed transport assessment has been carried out, which identifies the local road network requirements, as well as the impacts on the wider network. A range of improvements are promoted to ensure the further expansion of the town to the north can be accommodated with no net detriment. The full transport assessment is appended in section 6.
The connecting road, and all local roads will be designed in accordance with Designing Streets, to restrict traffic speeds along the local network. This will encourage drivers to use the distributor road for longer journeys. The distributor road will be designed in accordance with the Manual for Roads and Bridges, and will not provide direct access to properties. It will be a minimum of 6.5m wide.

The new distributor road will provide for bus access, including both the town service and the longer distance routes. The proposals to develop a park and ride service to the east of the town (within the M1 site) will also provide an overall benefit.

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 4.5.

Waste Disposal/Recycling
There will be a need to provide additional waste disposal and recycling facilities to serve the population, but these can be easily located at the existing Crows Nest site to the north west of the town boundary.

Facilities
Banchory has two primary schools, Banchory Primary and Hill of Banchory primary. There is capacity available in the primary schools to accommodate growth, although some rezoning may be necessary. Secondary School education is provided at Banchory Academy which is currently 103% of its capacity. However, the roll has remained constant for several years with a continued expansion within its catchment of around 60-70 houses per annum, and more recently the roll has begun to fall (a reflection of the ageing population). The allocations in the Local Development Plan will deliver a similar rate of growth. The site is constrained, and expansion is not feasible. The Local Development Plan does, however, identify a site for a new school if required in due course. This would be a replacement for Banchory Academy.

Banchory has a bustling high street, offering a good mix of shops and professional services. Outwith the town centre, convenience shopping is available at Morrison’s superstore. More recently, a Tesco store has been developed on the eastern edge of the town. There is also a small post office towards the top of Raemoir Road, and a small newsagents at Tillybrake. However, the town has grown east and west in the last half century, with no service centre supplementing the residential expansion. The Hill of Banchory development aimed to address this, with areas of business land and community facilities in its core. The business land is now beginning to fulfil its potential, and offers a range of employment opportunities. There is some way to go to complete the site, but the land is now fully serviced and available for development.

The community facilities developed to date include the Hill of Banchory Primary school, and a dance studio. Plans for a large leisure centre had received planning permission in principle, and its detailed design was at an advanced stage, before funding difficulties created a significant delay. However, the project has now been included in the Council’s capital plan and is currently scheduled to open in 2016. Beyond the leisure centre, there is additional land identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan as suitable for community uses. Fig 14 below shows this in context with Hill of Banchory and the masterplan area.
Considering the community uses area in more detail, the aerial photograph below (fig 15) shows the existing development on the site, and the area proposed for the development of a leisure centre. The remaining land is suited to smaller community uses, such as local retail and small scale services. 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 (considered further in section 4.2).

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.

**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 (the final 70 houses), 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 combined heat and power plant 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. This will be expanded to serve the new masterplan area. The plan below (fig 16) shows the location of the energy centre and the temporary gas boiler, and the area it serves. There is also an aerial photograph (fig 17) of the energy centre following its completion.
Fig 16 – District heating coverage (shaded red), and location of CHP plant relative to the masterplan area (shaded yellow).

Fig 16 demonstrates that the Biomass Combined Heat and Power Plant (CHP) is located ideally to serve much of the masterplan area, shaded in yellow.

Fig 17 – The biomass Combined Heat and Power plant completion 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. 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. This presentation, along with full copies of all of the survey and design work is available for inspection on our dedicated projects website, www.banchoryfutures.co.uk.

Following the submission of Proposal of Application Notices for both the M2 and H2 masterplan, and for a separate development brief for the adjacent M1 site, a public exhibition was held in the Banchory Business Centre on the 22nd and 23rd November 2012. An advert for the event was placed in the local press on the 9th November (see left)

The event was extremely successful, with around 100 attendees. The exhibition was split into two sections, covering the M2 and H2 masterplan, and the M1 development brief. Representatives from Archial (project architects), Hyder (project transport consultant), DWA Landscapes (project landscape architect), Ramsay and Chalmers (project engineers) and North Banchory Company were in attendance to answer questions posed by visitors.

Following the exhibition, NBC presented the initial outcomes of it to the Community Council on the 10th December. Feedback from this meeting was also documented in detail.
NBC were also contacted by a member of the local community who provided detailed ecological comments in response to the first draft of the masterplan report. Responses to his comments are also included in the report of consultation in a separate table. These comments led to a number of minor changes to the proposal, and have been a valuable step in the process.

Fig 18 – image from the exhibition in November 2012.

A detailed report on the consultation carried out to date, and the responses to the feedback received is included as an Appendix in section 6.
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 in detail, and identify the measures to be implemented to ensure the development improves Banchory as a place to live, work and play.

Fig 19 – The draft masterplan for Banchory (sites M2 and H2)

Please note that 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, which will be built during the first Local Development Plan period to 2016.

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.
4.2 Phasing Strategy

The Local Development Plan stipulates the proposed development should be delivered over the two periods of the plan, with 135 houses allocated in period 1 of the plan (2007-2016) on site M2, and 260 houses allocated in period 2 of the plan (2017-2023) – split between sites M2 (210 houses) and H2 (50 houses). An approximate phasing strategy is identified in fig 20 below. This shows phase 1 constructed to the east and phase 2 to the west, with the areas connected by a new distributor road. The employment element of the masterplan is identified in the east, adjacent to the existing business land to the south. The completion of the eastern half of the distributor road would therefore enable the delivery of the employment land towards the end of phase 1 or the start of phase 2. This is a logical timescale for the employment land, because there remains land on the Hill of Banchory Business Park for development before further expansion is required.

Phase 2 of the masterplan would be developed from the new roundabout on Raemoir Road, both to the east and the west of it. As the remainder of site M2 is developed, the distributor road would be built from Raemoir Road to the east, and finally connected with the eastern section built in phase 1. The Transport Assessment will identify the phasing of the new distributor road and associated junction improvements – in accordance with this overall phasing strategy, and to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to avoid impacts on the road network.

A potential departure from this phasing would be the development of phase 2a, which could be developed earlier. This site is suitable for larger houses than proposed for phase 1. Market demand, coupled with the rapid progress on the development at Wood of Arbeadie, suggest that this site may have to be taken forward prior to 2016. Similarly, phase 2b offers a different range of smaller house types than phase 2c, and therefore these two sites are also likely to be developed simultaneously.

Fig 21 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.

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As noted in section 2 of this masterplan report, the first 56 houses in phase 1a can be delivered without the need for affordable housing. It is hoped, therefore, that a detailed application for this first phase of development can proceed without the need for a section 75 agreement, following the approval of the masterplan. This would be in line with the recent approvals in Hill of Banchory, for which affordable housing was delivered in advance of the mainstream housing.

A start on site in 2015 is therefore anticipated, with completion of these first 56 units expected by 2016. Development will continue into the second half of phase 1a, 1b and possibly 2a depending on a number of variables. However, no more than 135 houses in total will be built on the M2 site until after the end of 2016, ensuring compliance with the schedule of delivery set out in the 2012 Local Development Plan.
4.3 Phase 1

The phase 1 housing land, identified in fig 20, has been the subject of greater detailed design work, as it is intended to begin development of the site as soon as possible, given that housing land within Hill of Banchory has now been exhausted. The site will begin from the existing roundabout in Hill of Banchory, with the new connecting road driven north towards the existing minor road. This will serve phase 1a, which consists indicatively of 89 houses. The distributor road will thereafter be developed from the north of phase 1a, east towards the Hirn road and the new junction with Hill of Banchory East, serving phase 1b and employment land. The Transport Assessment will determine exactly when the connections are necessary to ensure there is no undue impact on the road network.

Fig 22 – Phases 1a and 1b imposed on the aerial photograph.

The distributor road is shown on fig 24 (overleaf) passing the north of the site. Beyond this all hard surfaces will be pedestrian and cycle priority areas, as shown in beige. The private garden areas are left white on the plan, and areas of public open space shaded green. All the shaded areas together therefore create the public realm, with the private spaces tucked away behind houses wherever possible. An emphasis on corridors of public open space running both north to south and east to west has been designed into the layout, to encourage pedestrian and cycle movement both within the site and out of the site to the surrounding area.

Pedestrian links to the west of phase 1a are shown, but the creation of a formal network of footpaths within the Local Nature Conservation Site is not proposed. These links are intended to provide safe and convenient points of access to the general area for walkers and dog walkers. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, links to the south provide access to a more formal core path network in addition to these links to the wider countryside.

A draft accommodation schedule for phase 1a is shown below. The schedule for phases 1a and 2a have been established according to the current market demand, and the specific housing mix for phases 1b, 2b and 2c will be developed in due course, and submitted in support of detailed planning applications.

Fig 23 – Indicative accommodation schedules for phase 1a.

For the avoidance of doubt, a buffer strip will be included between the boundaries of domestic garden ground and any watercourses with a minimum width of 6m at all times. Any adjustments to the layout plan to accommodate this will be reflected in Full Planning Permission application drawings and landscape proposals.

As part of the phase 1 development, a phasing strategy shall be prepared for the delivery of roads infrastructure. The new distributor road will be built in sections, connecting to the existing road network. A strategy for any required improvements to and the inclusion of passing places on the existing U49K roads will be provided before any work is carried out on the new distributor road. It is expected that this requirement could form a condition on the Planning Permission in Principle for the development.
Fig 24 – Indicative proposals for phases 1a and 1b
4.4 Phase 2a

In addition to the detailed proposals for phase 1, more detailed consideration has been given to the layout of phase 2a. As explained in section 4.2, the market demand for larger family houses in Banchory remains positive, despite an emerging need for smaller houses. North Banchory Company wish to ensure that the masterplanning of Lochside of Leys provides opportunities to cater for all sections of the market, and are conscious that the development of housing at Wood of Arbeadie is nearing completion. The phase 1 proposals for Lochside of Leys contain predominantly smaller house types, ranging from one bedroom duplex units to three bedroom houses, with a small number of small four bedroom houses.

Phase 2a is located between the existing minor road that passes the Cow Shed restaurant and the proposed new distributor road, and could be developed in advance of the larger servicing and engineering work required to deliver phases 2b and 2c. Development of the 17 houses on this site would take access from the existing minor road, until such time as this could be amended to provide access to the new distributor road (if necessary). Drainage can potentially be dealt with via the existing pumping station serving the Upper Lochton and Wood of Arbeadie development areas.

![Fig 25 – Phase 2a indicative layout plan.](image)

Fig 25 – Phase 2a indicative layout plan.

Fig 26 below therefore shows the accommodation schedule proposed for phase 2a, with 17 larger houses ranging from 100 sq m to 253 sq m floor space.

![Fig 26 – Accommodation schedule for phase 2a – mostly five bedroom detached houses.](image)

Fig 26 – Accommodation schedule for phase 2a – mostly five bedroom detached houses.

The proposals include substantial new peripheral tree planting, to compliment the mature woodland blocks that currently surround the site. The low density development proposed means that this could comfortably sit within the landscape (before the development of phase 2b) without any detrimental visual impact. In fact, the provision of the peripheral planting in advance of the development of the distributor road would minimise the initial visual impact of its construction.

Several gaps within this planting are proposed, however, to maximise pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the distributor road and onwards towards facilities services, including schools and the core path network.

It is noted that improvements to the visibility at the junction of the access road and the A980 would be required if this proposal were to proceed ahead of the development of the new roundabout and distributor road serving the remainder of phase 2.
4.5 Phases 2b and 2c

As the masterplan process has progressed, additional detail has been worked into the second phase of the development proposals. Phase 1 has been worked up in detail in preparation for the submission of a detailed planning application in spring 2014, with an intention to start on site later in 2014 or early in 2015. Phases 2b and 2c will not be developed until after 2016.

The H2 site – to the west of Raemoir Road – is zoned in the 2012 ALDP as suitable for development after 2016. The allocation of the site for 50 houses will require a lower density than for the M2 site, and this is in keeping with the surrounding character at Upper Lochton. Since the 1980s, development in the area has been characterised by substantial houses in commodious plots.

It is therefore considered important to create an appropriate transition between the low density areas to the west and the higher density of the M2 site. The following phasing plan has therefore been prepared, with phase 2a being very low density, phase 2b being higher density, and phase 2c being low density.

The new distributor road serving phase 2b would take access from Raemoir Road via a new roundabout. This would also improve the existing access to Upper Lochton and Wood of Arbeadie by replacing the existing access. Similar to the proposals for Phase 1, Phase 2b incorporates terraces of houses fronting onto the new distributor road, with communal parking areas and access from the rear, to avoid the impression of housing turning its back on the road. Once off the distributor road, the street layout has been designed in accord with Designing Streets.

Phase 2c is much lower density development, and whilst the principles of Designing Streets have been incorporated into the design, the route of the distributor road, and the overall site area create certain restrictions. The provision of cul-de-sacs has therefore been unavoidable, but care has been taken to ensure pedestrian and cycle connectivity is available between all areas.

Fig 28 below shows the indicative phase 2 layout with retained and enhanced tree belts aimed at ensuring continued connectivity between woodland areas. The development of phases 2a and 2b will result in the loss of an area of commercial woodland that will be compensated by planting to the North of the site, along the south side of Loch of Leys. This is addressed in more detail in section 4.14.

Phase 2b is largely wooded at the current time, with commercial plantation woodland due for felling in the immediate future. However, there are some stands of more valuable woodland within the area, and these shall be surveyed in more detail prior to the submission of a detailed application for phase 2b. The final layout of the phase will seek to utilise trees worthy of retention for both amenity and habitat value within public open space areas. In this respect, layouts shown below are indicative only.

The large area of woodland to the Southeast of phase 2b is zoned for the development of a new school, but with a timescale for the delivery of that unclear, it is valuable to maintain wildlife corridors to and from it to the wider countryside in the interim. Retained woodland will be enhanced with a greater variety of species, as it will become permanent amenity woodland rather than the existing commercial crop.
4.6 Character Areas and 3D Analysis

On the basis of the above layouts, 3D modelling work has been undertaken of the phase 1 areas, with a view to providing a more in depth look at the character of the neighbourhoods and spaces that will be created within this development.

Development will begin from the south of phase 1a, by constructing a new road from the central roundabout in Hill of Banchory, past the existing Energy Centre. The construction of this road will also deliver the necessary services, including the district heating network connections, into the phase 1a area. The road will require the removal of part of the landscaped mound that was formed as part of early development works at Hill of Banchory. The re-grading of the mound will provide a visually interesting gateway into the new development area, whilst providing valuable visual screening between the new residential areas, the energy centre, and the business land to the south.

The first impression of phase 1a of the new development will be of a highly landscaped square which will immediately mark the transition between the connecting road and a designing streets compliant layout. A right angled entrance to the square will require that vehicular traffic slows to a near stop at this point. Fig 31 below shows this entrance into the development in three dimensions, showing a landscaped area of public open space in the centre of the square, and shared hard surfaces around it providing access to the houses. Houses in this part of phase 1a are among the largest proposed, primarily detached houses with off-street parking and private rear garden areas. There will be no fences between adjoining front gardens, however, to maximise the feeling of the gardens being part of the public realm, despite being included in private feus.

Continuing north into phase 1a, a substantial area of public open space has been incorporated, running from west to east. This provides a visual and a pedestrian/cycle connection between the Local Nature Conservation Site to the west, and eastwards across the Burn O’ Bennie (via a new crossing – one of two new pedestrian/cycle connections proposed across the burn) and into phase 1b.

This corridor of open space will enhance connectivity, and will also contribute a significant area of landscaped public green space, which will be overlooked by houses on all four sides. This provides an opportunity for informal children’s play and local amenity. It also links phase 1a neatly with the large area of public open space to the immediate east of the Burn O’ Bennie, that will be delivered in phase 1b. This space will include more formal children’s play areas and a kick-about area. Attractive walking routes will also be accessible alongside the Burn O’ Bennie to the east, and into the Local Nature Conservation Site to the west.
Along the eastern edge of phase 1a, smaller house types are introduced, including duplex and terraced properties. The duplex properties offer the opportunity for lower cost housing with limited maintenance requirements. They have shared courtyard parking areas, and are set in public green space, which will be maintained as part of the overall factoring arrangement. Depending on whether these are private sales, or identified as affordable housing, there may be small areas of private garden included around the buildings.

Terraced properties also have on-street or shared courtyard parking provision, and are designed in blocks of three or four units. Each has a modest area of private garden space, but will be set into communal open space, maintained as part of the factoring arrangement for the site. This will contribute to the overall community character of the development.

Further squares are proposed at the junctions of streets within the development, to provide attractive landscaped visual features, as well as provide natural traffic calming. The aim is to create streets where pedestrians and cyclists have priority over vehicles, with traffic speeds limited through design, rather than through additional traffic calming like speed humps. Street trees are included in the layout, to narrow sections of the carriageway, and reduce forward visibility, particularly across the abovementioned squares.

To the north west of phase 1a a further large square is proposed, to break up the free flow of vehicles between Hill of Banchory and the new distributor road. It will also provide additional public open space in the form of a landscaped green. This area will be overlooked on all four sides, and provide pedestrian and cycle links to the northwest into the wider countryside. It is proposed to include a new football pitch in the adjacent field, subject to approval by Aberdeenshire Council, and pedestrian access to it would be taken through this area.
Further terraced units are proposed alongside the new distributor road at the extreme north of phase 1a. Some of these properties will form part of the affordable housing contribution for this phase. The design of these houses has been considered very carefully to avoid an ‘insular’ character for the development. With the new distributor road forming the northern boundary of the M2 site, and the fact that houses cannot therefore take direct vehicular access from it, the impression of housing turning its back on the road must be avoided. The use of further terraced houses along this edge, with a frontage (including pedestrian and cycle access) on the northern elevations, and private gardens to the south will achieve this, and the location of the principle foot/cycle path following the route of the distributor road between the houses and the road will further contribute to this.

Fig 36 – Layout of housing fronting the new distributor road viewed from the northwest.

Figs 36 and 37 clearly shows that the layout will provide a welcoming approach to the site when viewed from the distributor road. The open space between the road and the houses will be factored green space and not private garden ground, and will therefore be maintained to a uniform standard across the whole frontage of the site. The location of the re-built boundary wall between the road and the foot/cycle path will also provide a distinct boundary to the development, as well as security and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Following completion of phase 1a, the distributor road will be developed to the east, forming a new crossing over the Burn O’ Bennie, and providing access to phase 1b. The foot/cycle path will also continue along the southern edge of the distributor road, providing connections back into phase 1a, and to the open space along the eastern edge of the Burn O’ Bennie.

Fig 37 – View of the terraced houses facing the distributor road from the north.

Fig 38 below shows the substantial area of public open space laid out to the east of the Burn O’ Bennie. This area will include a kick-about area and children’s play areas, providing a safe and attractive focal point to the whole of the phase 1 area. Attractive walks along either side of the Burn O’ Bennie will be created, both along the open area to the east (adjacent to phase 1b), and through the mature broadleaf woodland area to the west (adjacent with phase 1a).

Fig 38 – Phases 1a and 1b imposed on an aerial photograph looking south.
As proposed for phase 1a, the housing in phase 1b that faces the distributor road will be developed with a north facing ‘frontage’ with rear access and private garden space to the south. A similarly welcoming outward appearance will therefore be created, providing an attractive settlement edge.

Fig 39 below shows the northern edge of phase 1b, facing the distributor road. The inclusion of a mixture of terraced two-storey housing and semi-detached bungalows along this frontage creates greater visual interest.

Moving into the phase 1b area, the character is similar to phase 1a. The area has two principle east-west orientated streets lined on either side with landscaped public green space. They are the principle visual corridors, and accommodate courtyards and on street parking areas to serve the terraced units along the northern site boundary. The layout of these streets punctuated with squares at junctions with north-south orientated streets and footpaths, are designed to reduce vehicle speeds and encourage pedestrian and cycle use in a safe and welcoming environment. They are designed to be more than just streets to service properties, and are intended to provide an accessible common public realm. Fig 40 shows this corridor viewed from the north east.

In addition to this, the design has incorporated a central green space, linked to the north by a pedestrian link to the distributor road and the wider countryside. To the south there is a pedestrian link to the core path network and to Hill of Banchory beyond – across the Burn O’ Bennie.

To the east of phase 1b, the (re-routed) watercourse will be located in a new green corridor, designed to be similar to the Burn O’ Bennie, transecting the site from north to south – between the housing and the proposed employment land. This will be heavily planted with native tree species, with pedestrian and cycle crossings to maximise connectivity. These corridors are identified in fig 41 below.

Fig 40 – East-west orientated streets create wide public corridors of open space.

Fig 41 – Green corridors within phase 1b contributing substantial public open space.
Along the southern edge of phase 1b, the Burn O’ Bennie turns east and flows between the site and the woodland belt between Lochside of Leys and Hill of Banchory. Within this woodland belt, a core path runs from east to west, linking the Deeside Way in the east, to Raemoir Road and beyond into woodland to the west. The proposed development of phase 1b includes several pedestrian routes through to the south, where new crossings of the burn will provide direct access to the core path network. Wider connectivity is addressed later in this report.

This increased pedestrian and cycle connectivity will encourage residents of the area to walk and cycle to employment opportunities, education, leisure facilities and other services within Hill of Banchory. The design of the streets within the development, which will slow traffic and encourage pedestrian and cycle movement, will further contribute to this.

4.7 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 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.

4.8 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.
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.

![Image of existing core paths](image1)

Fig 43 – Existing core paths.

All the paths shown on the following plans as purple dashed lines will be built to an appropriate standard for all users, most likely with a blinded hardcore finish.

**Phase 1a** consists of around 90 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 44 demonstrates the key elements that will be provided as part of phase 1a.

![Image of new and improved paths and pedestrian crossing points](image2)

Fig 44 – New and improved paths and pedestrian crossing points for phase 1a.

Little work to the core path is proposed to the east of the site at this stage, because the formation of an improved channel for the Burn O’Bennie as part of phase 1b will be linked closely with the selection of the best route for this section of the core path. However, the core path will be delivered to a suitable standard for a stretch to the west, to provide three 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, and one possible pedestrian crossing (the requirement for this and the exact location is to be confirmed through further talks with the Council’s Roads Service. These would both link the development directly to the core paths within Hill of Banchory, and provide connectivity to schools, the proposed leisure centre, and neighbourhood centre facilities. The timing of the delivery of these crossings, and the type of crossing can be confirmed through the process of a suspensive planning condition, or through negotiation of the full planning application for phase 1a.

**Phase 1b** will deliver around 110 more units, bringing the total to 200. There is also the potential to include 2ha of new business land, although the timing of this is dependent on demand, considering there remains undeveloped business land within Hill of Banchory.

However, the core path will be completed to a suitable standard along with phase 1b from the Hill of Banchory East, to the section upgraded as part of Phase 1a. This will complete the eastern section of the upgraded core path, and provide non-motorised connectivity from all housing areas to Hill of Banchory and the services provided there. By this point in time, it is expected that the leisure centre will be open, and the neighbourhood centre will be developed, offering local retail facilities.
Fig 45 shows Phase 1b and the additional upgraded core path and additional paths that will be delivered as part of this phase of development.

Part of Phase 1b includes amendments to the channel of the Burn O’ Bennie, to address any potential flood risk. The exact route of the core path alongside this new channel will be confirmed through the detailed design work for phase 1b. Similarly, crossing points will be determined as part of the detailed planning application for phase 1b.

There will also be up to three connections between phases 1a and 1b, across the Burn O’Bennie. These paths will maximise connectivity for non-motorised vehicles.

Phase 2 - The detailed design work for phase 2 is some way into the future, but it will deliver around 195 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.

The lack of a defined existing path for phase 2 means that there is greater flexibility over it’s exact routing. It is proposed to take a section of path immediately east of Raemoir Road through a woodland belt within the proposed development site and connect into the wider woodland outwith the site. The core path to the west of Raemoir Road follows the existing Upper Lochton Road, and is already of a high standard. Upgrading of this section of path is not therefore proposed. Connectivity from the development site will be provided at regular intervals, subject to the design and layout for the phase being finalised.

Phase 2 will require the addition of a new pedestrian crossing across Raemir Road. The exact location of this will be established as part of the detailed planning process for phase 2.

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, so the location of a crossing may be dictated by this as opposed to the route of the core path.

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

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 47 overleaf shows the existing and proposed footpaths around the estate.
Fig 48 – Connections from the site to principle walking/cycling destinations
Public Transport. Banchory is well served at present by public transport, offering the following range of services.

Mainline corridor:
- 200 Aberdeen - Westhill - Banchory (2 per day)
- 201 Aberdeen - Banchory / Aboyne / Ballater / Braemar (hourly)
- 202 Aberdeen - Banchory / Torphins / Lumphanan / Aboyne / Ballater / Braemar (hourly)
- 203 Aberdeen - Banchory (hourly)

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

Connecting Services:
- 105 Banchory - Rickarton - Stonehaven (2 per day)
- 204 Strachan - Banchory - Aberdeen (2 per day)
- 205 Banchory Town Service (45 minute frequency)
- VH3 (Village Hopper) Aboyne - Finzean - Banchory (Thursdays)

In addition to these services, the Local Development Plan identifies, as part of the M1 site to the east of the town, an allocation of land for a park and ride facility.

The masterplan area has been designed to facilitate the provision of bus services, with the distributor road providing an important link from Raemoir Road to the A93 to the east of the town. The location of the distributor road along the northern edge of the site will ensure that all residents of the masterplan area will be within 400m of a bus stop.

Fig 49 – Existing bus stops and 400m radii circles

The initial design for the roads has been agreed in principle with Aberdeenshire Council’s Roads Service. Although subject to further discussion, it is anticipated that the distributor road will eventually be 6.5m wide, with a 3m wide cycleway. The distributor road will follow as close as possible the route of the existing minor road, with the bends straightened as appropriate to meet the standards for this class of road.
Where the proposed road meets Raemoir Road in the west, it more or less aligns with the existing road that serves the Crows Nest recycling site. The possibility of this section of road becoming part of a relief road around the northwest of Banchory has been discussed on numerous occasions in the past, but the delivery of such a road must be considered a long term ambition. The alignment of the new distributor road with the road to the Crows Nest site (which will also serve site H2) safeguards the potential for a full relief road to be completed in the future. It is important that the possibility is retained through the implementation of the Local Development Plan. In this respect, the section of road serving the H2 site will also be developed to the same distributor road standards as the section between Raemoir Road and the A93.

The landscaping of the distributor road will be important, because it will form the northern boundary of much of the town. It is intended to retain the existing stone walls that line the current minor road wherever possible, and to bolster this with additional native planting. The southern stone walls will be located between the road and the cycleway, to maximise the enjoyment and safety of cyclists and pedestrians.

The phasing of the delivery of the distributor road is set out in the following figures. An existing network of unclassified roads (U49K) will gradually be upgraded, to facilitate the development and form the distributor road.

**Phase 1a** consists of around 90 houses, and will be served from the existing roundabout in the centre of Hill of Banchory. Initially, an emergency access will be provided to the existing minor road, but the latter stages of this phase will see a section of the new road built, providing a second point of access. Prior to the creation of this section of new road, a detailed survey of the existing minor road will be carried out, with proposals for improving bends, sightlines and creating passing places as well as any other necessary improvements identified. Visibility at the junction of the minor road with the A980 will be assessed and improvements delivered as required. This work will require the closure of a short section of the U49K road, as shown in Fig 52.

**Phase 1b** will deliver around 110 more units, bringing the total to 200 (albeit no more than 135 can be delivered until after 2016 in accordance with the LDP allocation). This can be delivered with a section of the new distributor road fronting the development area, tying back into the U49K to the east. A new priority junction will be formed on the U49K to replace the temporary arrangement formed in phase 1a.

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 until the whole road is upgraded.
Phase 1b with business land. Timing of the development of this land is dependent on demand, particularly since there are still undeveloped sites within Hill of Banchory. The delivery of the business land will require the extension of the new distributor road to the east, to link with the existing junction onto Hill of Banchory East. This will also require a new priority junction onto the U49K Hirn Road. As part of the detailed submissions to planning for the business land, an assessment of the existing junction of the U49K and Hill of Banchory East will be carried out, to identify any required improvements to it. This would include the provision of a continuous of the pedestrian and cycle routes from the new section of distributor road to connect to Hill of Banchory East.

Phase 2a – depending on market conditions, phase 2 may commence before the conclusion of phase 1, due to it containing larger houses and appealing to a different market. In terms of roads infrastructure, however, it will operate independently.

Phase 2a could (in the short term) take access from the existing U49K directly to the A980 to the west. It is understood that there would need to be improvements to the visibility at this junction, were they not already delivered as part of phase 1.

Phase 2b adds approximately 128 houses to the development. This will necessitate the delivery of a four legged roundabout onto the A980, which will replace the existing access to Upper Lochton and the Crows Nest recycling centre. A new stretch of 6.5m wide distributor road will be formed to the east of the A980, linking to the U49K to the east of phase 2a. The formation of the roundabout will provide a significant improvement to the access to the Upper Lochton and Upper Arbeadie residents. The future of the existing junction between the U49K and the A980 will need to be discussed in detail as part of a detailed application for phase 2a. This will be particularly important for the viability of the existing Cow Shed restaurant.

As part of phase 2b, the distributor road will be completed and priority at the junction with Hill of Banchory East changed accordingly. The trigger point for this will be determined at the PPiP stage through discussion with the Council’s Roads and Transportation Services.

Phase 2c is located to the west of the A980. It is possible that phase 2c will progress in advance of phase 2b, due to a different character and housing mix. This will be a market led decision. If this is the case, it will require the delivery of the same 4 legged roundabout onto the A980 that is proposed in phase 2b, with a length of 6.5m wide distributor road leading west along the line of the existing access to the Crows Nest recycling centre. This will provide an improved access to the existing Upper Lochton and Upper Arbeadie areas.

The timing of the delivery of the distributor road in the event of phase 2c preceding phase 2b will be determined at the PPiP stage through discussion with the Council’s Roads and Transportation Services. Upon delivery of phase 2c, a pedestrian crossing over the A980 may also be required to link to phase 2b.
In addition to the new distributor road, the development will require improvements to the wider road network in Banchory to mitigate the impact of additional traffic. As part of phase 1a, the Transport Assessment identifies improvements to the signalised junctions at Raemoir Road/A93, and A93/Dee Street. These upgrades include adjustments to the traffic light phases in accordance with traffic volumes, rather than a timed cycle. Additional traffic modelling work will be carried out to demonstrate that these proposed upgrades will address any increased congestion in advance of the approval of Planning Permission in Principle.

The Transport Assessment also identifies the necessity to incorporate a right turn lane on Raemoir Road at the junction with Hill of Banchory West as a result of the proposed new secondary school (included in the traffic modelling as part of the phase 2 development), in order to accommodate potential queuing in this location. This would also include a pedestrian crossing on Raemoir Road. The full transport assessment is appended to this report in section 6.

4.9 Land Use

The mix of land uses is specified in the Local Development Plan allocations, for sites M2 (345 houses and 2ha business land) and H2 (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 Centre, the recently completed Business Centre 2, the proposed Neighbourhood Centre in Hill of Banchory, Tesco and the Hill of Banchory Primary School. Fig 58 below shows these facilities and sites with 400m (green) and 800m (yellow) radius circles imposed.

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

Fig 58 shows an interesting picture, in terms of accessible facilities. Employment opportunities in the business land, are easily accessible from the phase 1 development area, as are the proposed facilities in the neighbourhood centre in Hill of Banchory. 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 the neighbourhood centre. On the basis of solely residential development in the area, a reliance on the private car could result. 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 59, 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.

Fig 59 – Walkable neighbourhoods with proposed new commercial/retail provision in phase 2.

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 approximately 1000sqm of retail and 2000sqm of office accommodation adjacent to the Raemoir Road/new distributor road junction. This could provide retail and employment opportunities for residents of the new phase 2 development and also a considerable number of existing properties.

Planning policy with regard to 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.

4.10 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 60 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 60 – Proposed foul drainage solution.

The Action Plan 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 is expected to take 2-3 years to complete. This was unexpected, and largely the result of a very large take up of capacity by developments at Crathes and in the Hill of Banchory Business Park. However, because the growth project has been initiated, Scottish Water will support a temporary solution to enable development to progress. Details of such a solution will be provided as part of detailed planning applications.

Discussions have commenced on the size and capacity of a temporary treatment plant with Scottish Water and SEPA, which will enable development of phase 1 to commence. This will be of a sufficient capacity to cover any slippage in the delivery of the additional public drainage capacity provided through the growth project. It is anticipated that this will be designed to serve around the first 150 houses of Lochside of Leys, on phases 1a and 1b.

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. Surface water runoff from the remainder of the site will feed into detention basins that will in turn either discharge to the existing watercourses. 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.

An example of how the surface water drainage system will work is shown in fig 61 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.

Fig 61 – Typical surface water drainage proposal adjacent to the Local Nature Conservation Site.

This approach applies primarily to the western half of site M2, 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**

Scottish Water have noted that there may be a necessity for local mains reinforcement, and that the Laird’s Cast Pumping Station may need to be upgraded. Assessment work has been carried out by Scottish Water and by Aberdeenshire Council as part of the Local Development Plan review to ensure that the nature conservation interests of the River Dee will continue to be protected.

As part of Bancon Homes’ sustainability agenda, reducing the demand for water is identified as a key area of importance. The use of highly water efficient white goods made by Siemens/Bosch (providing a 25% reduction in water usage), eco flush toilets and the installation of water butts as standard on all new homes 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 in particular.

**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 sufficient capacity for the proposed development.

**Gas**

The Hill of Banchory area is currently served by a gas supply, with the majority 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 use gas only for cooking.

**District Heating**

The site will be served by the recently completed 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 M2 area, and potentially to the H2 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 zero carbon solution.

4.11 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. The provision of a town bus service contributes to this, as well as the large amount of passing trade from tourists.

Fig 62 – Banchory High Street.

Until 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).

Fig 63 – New 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 the location of much of the masterplan area would necessitate the use of public transport or private car to access these. It is therefore desirable to ensure that some retail provision is provided within walking distance of the new development. Section 4.8 – 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.

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 sufficient space to expand to provide the necessary service for the growing catchment area. The Local Development Plan identifies the need for a new medical centre, but a site has not been identified. Discussions are ongoing with NHS Grampian about a number of options, but the provision of a medical centre as part of the neighbourhood centre in Hill of Banchory is an option that could be explored further, and would be ideal for serving the population of the masterplan area. Regardless of the location of such a facility, it is acknowledged that all new development will be expected to contribute towards its provision through developer contributions.

Should the delivery of a medical centre ultimately fall on land under the control of North Banchory Company, the provision of dental facilities would also be explored, as a joint facility would be logical.
Education
At present, there is sufficient primary school capacity in Banchory for considerably more housing than the Local Development Plan allocates land for. However, the capacity exists mainly at Banchory Primary School, located adjacent to the Academy. Hill of Banchory Primary School is close to capacity, and is forecast to exceed capacity in 2016. Geographically, Hill of Banchory Primary School is best located to serve the phase 1 development. The 2013 forecast projects a 108% roll (26 pupils over capacity) in 2018, based upon the housing numbers allocated in the Local Development Plan.

Banchory Primary School has a large amount of spare capacity, equivalent to around 450 houses, and therefore the town has comfortably enough overall capacity to serve the proposed development. However, this may require a degree of rezoning of catchment areas in time, to ensure a reasonable balance between the two schools.

The phase 2 development is well located to access Banchory Primary School, by a safe and convenient walk down Raemoir Road.

Secondary school roll forecasts suggest a falling roll, with the development of the masterplan factored into the projections. Banchory Academy has, however, been operating at over the designed capacity for some time, although this has reduced from 125% to 103% since 2006, and is expected to continue to fall slowly. The site on which it sits is constrained, so expansion or improvement is not easy, and the playing fields are sited remotely from the school campus. For these reasons, the identification of a new site at R3 has been included in the Local Development Plan, to ensure that a future replacement school can be located as conveniently as possible, to serve the town’s population.

The development of a new secondary school campus on the R3 site, which measures 10 hectares, would also contribute to the provision of playing fields in Banchory, addressing an identified shortfall.

There are currently 4 vehicular accesses available into the R3 site (Fig 64), and these will not be removed or compromised. Pedestrian access into the R3 site is excellent, with a core path running along its northern boundary, in addition to the 4 vehicular access points.

It is acknowledged that developer contributions to education and recreation will be expected from all development in the town, in line with the Council’s standard approach to calculating developer contributions.

Playing Fields
The settlement infrastructure requirements set out in the 2012 Local Development Plan supplementary guidance include the need for a full sized pitch and a small sided pitch. However, the requirement for a football pitch is included as part of the M1 development to the east of the town – not on the M2 site.

Nevertheless, the potential to locate a pitch adjacent to phase 1a, within the Local Nature Conservation Site but on an existing agricultural field of limited ecological value, was explored, but not supported by the Council’s Environment Planners. The opportunity to make an off-site contribution towards the provision of a football pitch elsewhere in Banchory was also explored. This could be a contribution towards a new pitch, or the upgrading of a multi-purpose pitch in light of the high quality rugby pitches on the M1 site potentially allowing more exclusive football use of existing facilities. This has been explored with the Council’s Planning Gain Team and agreed as a reasonable way forward.

It is understood that resolving this issue is a priority, and it is suggested that early dialogue with Members and Officers to discuss possible options of delivering a football pitch in Banchory would be beneficial for all parties.
4.12 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. The majority of residential streets link to each other in a grid format, with cul-de-sacs only used when absolutely 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. Of particular importance is the street lighting designed to light the distributor road, and this will be assessed as part of the detailed planning application with the Council’s environment planners.

Within the residential areas, street lighting will be installed in accordance with a design code for the whole masterplan area, which will also address street furniture and hard landscaping, to ensure a consistent approach across the whole area. This has been successful in Hill of Banchory, although the design code may require modernisation. The design code will be developed as part of an application for planning permission in principle, in consultation with Aberdeenshire Council.

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.

With regard to the wider parking constraints in Banchory, positive steps have been taken towards the delivery of a Park and Choose facility on the M1 site to the East of the town, which will reduce pressure on long term town centre parking.

4.13 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, as highlighted in Fig 66. 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 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, with the provision of formal play areas and a kickabout area included adjacent to it. Access for pedestrians and cyclists across the burn will be provided, with foot and cycle paths running parallel to it, 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 H2 site, there is a single block of woodland that will be retained in its current state, as a valuable visual feature.
4.14 Open Space

The approach to providing open space within developments has changed as part of the 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 absolutely necessary is prohibitive.

The new 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 M2 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 H2, extensive Forestry Commission controlled land provides a network of woodland walks.

To the east of the M2 site one finds 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 M2 and H2.

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 red shaded areas.

As mentioned elsewhere in this masterplan, the layouts for phase 1a and 1b 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 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.
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. It would be most appropriate to deliver this as part of a new secondary school on the R3 site, rather than as part of the M2 or H2 site. The delivery of the leisure centre on the community facilities site in Hill of Banchory will also be within the appropriate distance of the masterplan. The LDP identifies the need for a full sized football pitch, which has been explored in 4.10 above.

Community Play Areas
A local play area is proposed in the centre of the phase 1 development, adjacent to the Burn O’ Bennie. As well as the play facilities, it is also proposed that a small kick-about area be provided, to provide for slightly older children without the need to walk very far. A further play facility will be provided as part of the phase 2 development, within the M2 area, shown indicatively in the southwest corner where several footpaths converge. However, the detailed design and location of the play area will be determined at the detailed planning stage. The H2 site is within easy walking distance of the play facilities at Upper Lochton, and as a result it will not be necessary to provide a third facility.

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.

Burial Grounds
The Local Development Plan reserves land to the west of site H2 for the provision of a cemetery.

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 the majority 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 the majority 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.

4.15 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. This is shown indicatively in Fig 61 below.

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 20-30m, 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 70 is on land within the same ownership as the applicant, and thus it would be possible to ensure the planting is carried out timeously by means of a planning condition on the PPiP consent. It is intended to begin the planting work in 2015 in any case.

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 70 – Indicative structural woodland planting on Leys Estate.](image_url)

4.16 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 Structure Plan and Proposed Strategic Development Plan seek 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.

The mix of house types will be wider ranging than in Hill of Banchory, with the inclusion of smaller house types to suit the current market conditions and demographics. The population of the North East is ageing rapidly, with the number of over-65s forecast to double by 2030. It is logical to expect that as people live longer, they will also want to live independently for longer, and the concept of smaller houses with less private space to maintain has been adopted in the masterplan. These are arranged in both terraces and duplex type units.

The phase 1 development area will contain a greater proportion of smaller housing units than phase 2, which will contain more detached houses mixed with duplex apartments, in order to maintain an appropriate spread of house types across the area as a whole. The H2 site will contain the lowest density development, in line with the established character of that part of the town.

4.17 Security

The detailed design of each phase of development will be carried out in accordance with the Secured by Design philosophy. Hill of Banchory has been successful in this regard, and the principles established over the last 10 years will be continued.

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.

In contrast to the Hill of Banchory Development, a broader range of house sizes will be built, to accommodate the needs of individual households better.

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 ways 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, while proposals for a neighbourhood and leisure centre are progressing towards fruition. 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 development of Hill of Banchory followed a similar design guide prepared in 1996, and as a result has succeeded in maintaining an identifiable character, consistency and sense of place. 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 the majority of 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. North Banchory Company 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. It is important to ensure that such works do not detract from the overall character and quality of the development at Lochside of Leys.

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 any planning conditions restricting permitted development rights.

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

Distributor Road
There will be two distinct road types in the Lochside of Leys Development. Strategically, there is a requirement for a new improved distributor road to serve the development, and this will comply with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The road will be 6.5m in width, and include foot and cycle paths along its length. Where it meets Raemoir Road, there will be a new roundabout, and to the east of the development it will connect with the existing Hill of Banchory East road.

To the west of Raemoir Road, the standard of this road will remain the same, to allow for its integration into any future Banchory relief road, which has been considered at various times over the last decade or more.

Designing Streets
Apart from this distributor road, 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.

Street Lighting

Subject to the agreement of the Highway Authority, the street lighting shall follow the traditional designs utilised in Hill of Banchory for main streets (see image on the left). Appropriately designed discreet lighting will be provided for cycle and footpaths that provide safe routes to schools, to minimise any impacts on the rural setting of the development, and the Local Nature Conservation Site.

Bus Stops

Bus stops and laybys will be provided on the new distributor road, to compliment the bus stops already provided on the Hill of Banchory East, West and South network. Such a provision will ensure that all households within Hill of Banchory and Lochside of Leys will be within 400 metres (or a reasonable 5 minute walk) of a bus 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 with regard to 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.

The new distributor road will bound the site to the north, and where possible it will be lined with dry stone dykes, either retained or rebuilt from the down takings from the walls that line the existing rural road.

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 hawthorn 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 North Banchory Company 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. Housing may have parking at the rear, and have principle elevations facing either open space or the distributor road, giving the site a welcoming character, rather than all houses facing into the site and turning its back on the surrounding area.

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
Much 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. Layouts will cater for a percentage of visitor parking, and where housing fronts the distributor road, some parking will be provided in laybys off the distributor road as well as on-street parking to the rear of properties. 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 (12 metres from upper floor habitable room windows to a common boundary, and 18 metres from window to window of habitable rooms).

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 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. Each house will nevertheless have a gas supply for cooking.
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.

Indicative street elevations showing traditional proportions and details.

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.
  - Duo Edgemere (by Marley Eternet) interlocking slate tiles
  - Houses and terraced rows fronting the new distributor road shall have chimney features exiting at the apex of the roof.

- **b) Wall finishes**
  - Render – K Rend
  - Stonework – Forticrete textured or fairfaced blocks
  - Linings – stained timber

- **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 grey PVC.  
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).

![Banchory Christian Fellowship Church](image1.png)  
![Buchanan’s Bistro](image2.png)

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 extensive 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 a height of greater than 5m above ground level at any time. 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
5  Procedural Requirements

5.1  Community Engagement

Community Engagement to Date
One of the key elements in developing this masterplan successfully will be the involvement of the local community in its production. NBC, being based in Banchory, have been keen to make 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.

The event was extremely successful, with around 100 attendees. The exhibition was split into two sections, covering the M2 and H2 masterplan, and the M1 development brief. Representatives from Archial (project architects), Hyder (project transport consultant), DWA Landscapes (project landscape architect), Ramsay and Chalmers (project engineers) and North Banchory Company were in attendance to answer questions posed by visitors.

Following the exhibition, NBC presented the initial outcomes of it to the Community Council on the 10th December. Feedback from this meeting was also documented in detail.

NBC were also contacted by one member of the local community who provided detailed comments in response to the first draft of the masterplan report. Responses to his comments are also included in the report of consultation in a separate table. These comments led to a number of minor changes to the proposal, and have been a valuable step in the process.

The full report of consultation is included in section 6.

5.2  Developer Contributions

Alongside the community engagement process, we have attended a masterplanning meeting with Aberdeenshire Council officials, with feedback also incorporated into this amended report. This has facilitated early discussions with various services within the Council, including Planning Gain and Housing, regarding the delivery of appropriate levels of affordable housing and facilities to support the expanding population. Detailed discussions will continue, and be addressed fully in a S75 agreement associated with a Planning Permission in Principle application for the whole masterplan area.

5.3  Management Arrangements

NBC will review, as part of the major applications process, the position of Aberdeenshire Council with regard to the potential adoption of open space, as is the case in Hill of Banchory. However, in light of the most recent policies of open space, it is likely that the long term maintenance will be factored to a third party. The provision of much of the open space as low or no maintenance is therefore encouraged. The function of the open space will be detailed on a landscape plan as part of each detailed planning application on the site, with appropriate maintenance proposals specified. It is expected that core paths will be adopted by Aberdeenshire Council in due course.

The full report of consultation is included in section 6.
6 Appendices
6 Appendices

A  Transport Assessment
B  Landscape Capacity Study
C  Exhibition Boards
D  Report of Consultation
E  Ecological Survey
F  Drainage Impact Assessment
G  Flood Risk Assessment
I  Sample Landscape Proposals for Phase 1a