

# PLANNING BRIEF FOR EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT AT NEWBURGH

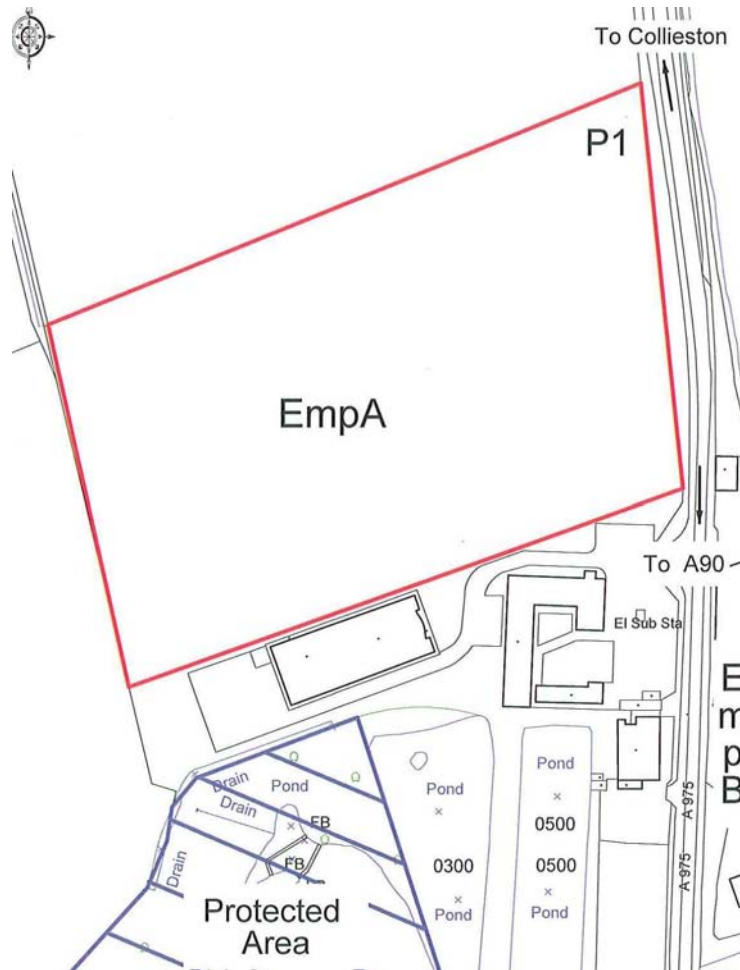


Figure 1: Location Plan

**MARCH 2007**

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

## **Purpose**

### **1.1 Type of development preferred**

- The development of high quality, prestige employment uses, together with an extension to the adjoining education and research development is preferred.
- This brief seeks to ensure that the development of this sensitive, gateway site is well structured, appropriate to its surroundings and makes a positive contribution to the area.

### **1.2 Constraints and limitations**

- Newburgh enjoys a unique location within Aberdeenshire and the site sits west of the Ythan Estuary which is Special Protection Area; a Biogenic Reserve; a RAMSAR site; a National Nature Reserve; a Nature Conservation Review Site; and Geological Conservation Review Site; a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Site of Interest to Natural Science.

### **1.3 Relevant development plan policies and guidance**

- The site is allocated as EmpA in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan as suitable for high quality, prestige employment uses (Class 4) and strategic landscaping (see Figure 1).
- **SPG** Scottish Planning Policy 2: Economic Development  
Scottish Planning Policy 17: Planning for Transport
- **Circulars** Circular 12/1996 Planning Agreements
- **NEST**  
  
Policy 1: Employment Land  
Policy 2: Employment Land Distribution  
Policy 13: Developer Contributions  
Policy 21: Design
- **Aberdeenshire Local Plan**  
  
Policy Env\5a: Areas of Landscape Significance  
Policy Emp\1: Allocated and Existing Employment Land  
Policy Inf\1: Roads and Accesses  
Policy Inf\2: Parking, Servicing and Accessibility  
Policy Inf\4a: Foul Drainage Standards

Policy Inf\4b: Surface Water Drainage Standards: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

Policy Inf\5: Water Supply

Policy Gen\1: Sustainability Principles

Policy Gen\2: The Layout, Siting and Design of New Development

Policy Gen\3: Developer Contributions

Policy Gen\5: Landscaping Standards

Policy Gen\8: Flooding

Policy Gen\12: Project Areas

Appendix 1: The Design of New Development in Aberdeenshire

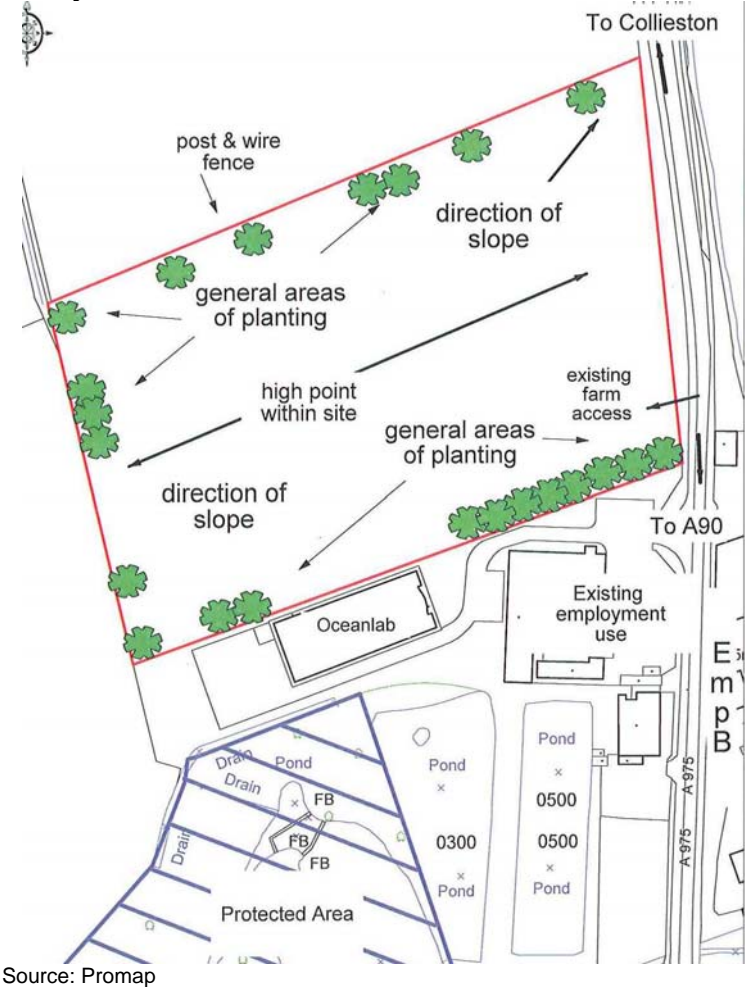
Appendix 5: Landscape Design Guidance

Appendix 6: Provision of Public Open Space

**Site Analysis**

The following is not an exhaustive site description, but a list of key issues that lead to the site requirements in the next section.

*Figure 2: Site Analysis*



## **2.1 Location / setting / views**

- The site is located to the north of Newburgh, overlooking the Ythan Estuary and extends to approximately 2.1 ha (5.2 acres). It is bound to the north and west by open fields; to the south by a range of education and research buildings owned by the the University of Aberdeen. The most notable being the Oceanlab building which is a two storey structure with a vaulted roof finished in grass. It is bound to the east by the A975 and beyond this the Estuary. There is a boat house also owned by the University of Aberdeen to the south east of the site which provides access to the River Ythan for field research.
- There are attractive views from the site to the east overlooking the Ythan Estuary and Forvie Sands.
- The site is generally level, however, there is a slight fall in the north east corner and towards the western edge of the site.

## **2.2 Climatic Considerations**

- The site is relatively exposed and the coldest winds are from the north west. The site is slightly protected by the dunes across the estuary, however, the North Sea is in close proximity of the site.
- The site will benefit from its exposed aspect to the east that affords the opportunity to capitalise on maximum sun exposure.

## **2.3 Ecological Considerations**

- The site falls within land identified by NESBReC as 'other neutral grassland'. This covers all unimproved and semi-improved grasslands.
- The nearby Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch are Special Protection Areas (SPA), designated for the conservation of wild birds. These areas are also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna and forms part of a Ramsar site under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.
- The Sands of Forvie and Ythan Estuary are Sites of Special Scientific Interest for their biological and geological interest. The biological interests are the sand dunes and breeding bird assemblage. The geological interest is for the sand dune system.
- The proposals are not connected to the conservation management of qualifying interests within the Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA or SAC. However, Aberdeenshire Council, following advice from SNH, may require that an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposal on the interests of the SPA and SAC be carried out. Further guidance is provided in Appendix 1.

- Consideration should be given to all possible direct and indirect impacts the proposals may have on the features of interest for both the SPA and SAC. The Ythan Estuary is particularly sensitive to nitrates which have a potential threat to invertebrates living within the estuary and the bird life which relies upon them. The developer should therefore consider any impacts to the Ythan Estuary from sediment that may be released during the construction period.
- The biodiversity of the Ythan Estuary is closely linked to its surroundings and every effort must be made to ensure that negative impacts do not occur.
- The site falls just outwith the boundary of the 'undeveloped coast' and an Area of Landscape Significance. The highest standard of design, in terms of location, scale, siting, aesthetics and landscaping will be required due to its proximity to such areas.
- If work is to be carried out within 10 metres of any watercourse then a check for otter holts, and water voles should be undertaken before the start of any works.
- Badgers are widespread in Grampian and it is possible that they may be present in the area of the proposed development. It is recommended that if full information is not already available, a badger survey is carried out by an experienced badger surveyor.
- It is important that any proposals for development integrate with and enhance the surrounding landscape. Any current or informal opportunities for access to open space in the area should be maintained, however, there are no rights of way across the site.
- The site comprises agricultural land. There are areas of planting and some mature trees along the north, south and western boundaries of the site, and these are worthy of retention.

## **2.4 Urban Context**

- The site currently represents the northern limit of the village of Newburgh. Development in Newburgh has largely followed the line of the A975, resulting in a linear pattern.
- There are existing University of Aberdeen research buildings to the south of the site and a boat house with slip way on the River Ythan to the south east of the site. The remainder of the site is surrounded by open fields, with residential development located further south towards the centre of Newburgh. Traditional properties line the main road, with more recent areas of housing also along this route. A mixed use development is under construction to the south east of the site at the Quayside.
- The existing University of Aberdeen building to the immediate south of the site is an example of contemporary, innovative design and is worthy of note.

## **2.5 Access**

- No roads currently exist on the site. The A975 runs along the eastern boundary.
- No footpaths exist along the roadside of the site. The nearest footpaths serve the existing Oceanlab Field Station approximately 10 metres to the south of the site.
- The site is accessible by a range of transport methods. There are various frequent, daily bus services running through Newburgh to Aberdeen, Ellon, Balmedie and Peterhead. An hourly service operates in peak times. There are bus stops directly outside the existing Oceanlab building going in both directions. These bus stops are approximately 50 metres to the south of the site.
- The issue of transport is important for pedestrians who work at or visit the site, cyclists, private vehicles and delivery or company vehicles. There is no requirement for access through the site to adjacent land as no rights of way over the site exist.

## **2.6 Utilities and other services**

- In respect of the provision of a water supply, there is sufficient capacity to serve any development on this site and this has been confirmed by Scottish Water. A mains extension is likely to be required to service any proposed development.
- There is capacity in the sewage treatment works at this time to service the development and this has also been confirmed by Scottish Water. A Drainage Impact Assessment will be required for any development proposals taken forward to a planning application.
- Gas is available in Newburgh. Any supply required for the site will require further investigation.
- No provision is currently made for renewable energy in the village.
- Broadband is available in Newburgh.
- The nearest services are located in the centre of Newburgh, to the south of the site approximately 500 metres away. There are a range of small specialist shops, a church, village hall, a primary school and two hotels.
- The nearest library facilities are located in Ellon and Balmedie. A mobile library operates weekly in Newburgh every Tuesday.

## **2.7 Other considerations**

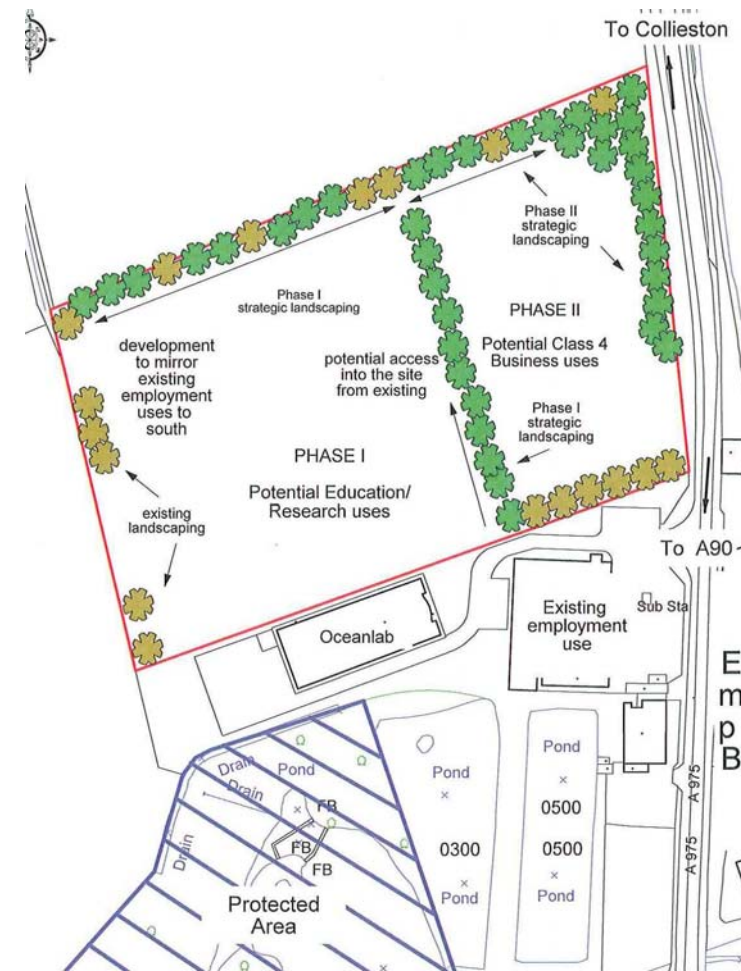
- The site is presently in the single ownership of the Schelenberg Family and can be developed subject to the necessary planning permissions.

## 2.8 Conclusions

- This site provides the opportunity to develop high quality, prestige employment uses as well as education and research uses with associated strategic landscaping.
- As this site will create the new northern gateway to Newburgh, a high standard of design is expected. Care should be taken to ensure that development is compatible with the existing employment facilities to the south of the site.

## Site Requirements

Figure 3: Indicative Land Use proposal Map



### 3.1 Layout

- **Solar Considerations.** The site occupies an exposed location with potential to take advantage of any available solar radiation in the proposed buildings. Heating gain can be maximised by orientating the building(s) to face south. Walls should be as free as possible from overshadowing and if more than one building is proposed they should be appropriately spaced north to south to maximise solar gain.
- **Wind considerations.** The use of strategic landscaping and embankments is an effective method of reducing the impact of wind blowing across the site, therefore reducing the amount of heat loss. The space between buildings is critical in preventing unwanted turbulence there should be no gaps of 3 metres or less between buildings. Consideration should be given to the incorporation of a courtyard for maximum shelter.
- **Energy.** A substantial amount of everyday energy use should be derived from microrenewables. The Scottish Ministers have set a target of generating 40% of Scotland's electricity from renewable sources by 2020 (SPP6: Consultation Draft). As of the moment, however, this remains aspirational. A statement on renewable energy technologies considered should be submitted with the proposals and justifiable reasons given for any rejected. A series of flow charts is attached to aid this consideration (Appendix 2). The advice of 'SCARF' may also be useful in this respect and any available grants can be discussed with them.
- **Resource Efficiency.** The development of this site will require the construction of a new access road and car parking, and should be minimised to what is necessary. The use of energy efficient, low maintenance and sustainable materials is encouraged whenever practicable. Any materials excavated from the site should be used for the development of the site where possible.
- **Biodiversity.** There are opportunities to enhance the biodiversity and mitigate against any adverse ecological impacts on the site. The introduction of strategic landscaping in the north east corner will encourage a range of flora and fauna and therefore improve the biodiversity value of the site and the wider area. As will appropriately designed soft landscaping throughout the development site allied with the incorporation of SUDs measures. Further advice for landscape design is provided in Appendix 5 of the Aberdeenshire Local Plan.
- **These elements and others are described in detail in the document 'Development Within Nature' published by Aberdeenshire Council, which is used to assess the environmental friendliness of new developments. This publication is specifically for new housing developments, however there are many points which can be applied to this site. Developers and strongly recommended to refer to this.**

### 3.2 Distribution of Land Uses

- The key land uses expected as part of this development are buildings, open space and strategic landscaping, pedestrian access, and car parking / hardstanding. The correct mix and layout of these uses will significantly determine the success or otherwise of any development.
- It is envisaged that the site would be developed in phases and the University of Aberdeen have an interest in Phase I of this site. There is justification in developing to the west of the site first, due to the existing University buildings to the south of the site.
- There is the potential to develop part of the site for education and research uses due to the proximity of such uses to the south of the site. This would allow flexibility in attracting a range of potential users to the site and would sit well with the existing University of Aberdeen Oceanlab building.
- Consideration should be given to development which compliments the adjacent Oceanlab building. This is an award winning, contemporary and innovative building which would meet the high quality employment uses that are identified for this site in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan. Development should therefore be of a high quality, modern, innovative design. To ensure any new buildings fit well with the landscape to minimise visual impacts from the north, careful consideration should be given to building heights particularly to the north east and east of the site.
- Open Space. It is important that open space has a clear purpose and not simply an area of land that is left over from the development. Open space should therefore be given consideration at the outset
- Strategic landscaping. Whilst strategic landscaping is identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan to the north east corner of the site the northern and eastern boundary should also be screened to provide protection from the elements. Strategic landscaping should take place in phases to sub-divide the site. As further phases are developed, strategic landscaping should be provided along the road verge to the east of the site to mitigate the impact of the development. A properly designed landscaping scheme within the site will be required.
- Pedestrian access. The provision of public pedestrian access should be considered to provide access to areas of strategic landscaping on the site.
- Car parking / hardstanding. Other than the main building(s) on the site, car parking and hardstanding will represent a major land use. This should not dominate the site. Parking standards will have to be met for employees and visitors and appropriate measures taken to allow for other vehicles.
- Waste Management Facilities. Appropriately scaled and located facilities for waste segregation and recycling should be incorporated

into the design from the outset. It will not be acceptable for bins to be introduced at a later stage and placed in car parking spaces or other open areas.

### **3.3 Access**

- Consideration should be given to the sharing of the existing access and footpaths serving the existing employment site to the south to serve the proposed employment uses, since the land use is of the same nature. The principle of this is acceptable to Aberdeenshire Council's transportation and infrastructure department.
- Discussions should be held with Aberdeenshire Council's transportation and infrastructure service to investigate access further.
- No alteration to the public transport services serving the village will be required. Bus stops serving north and south bound routes are conveniently located to the south of the site within approximately 50 metres.
- All emergency and service accesses will be accommodated by the internal access roads to be constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Officer and Roads Authority.
- Public access should be considered to and from the area of strategic landscaping on the site. An access plan may be required as part of any landscape plan to address this.
- Access routes must be built to Disability Discrimination Act standards and suitable provision should be made for disabled parking.
- The number of parking bays provided must accord with the adopted 'Car Parking Standards for Development Control' and SPP17. Provision must also be made for a small number of visitor spaces. Along with disabled car parking spaces, these should be located nearest to the building(s).

### **3.4 Infrastructure and Other Services**

- Drainage. A new foul drainage system should be provided for this site, constructed to a standard adoptable by Scottish Water.
- Supply and Distribution of water. All water will be supplied from a nearby public water main. The location of the nearest distribution main will have to be investigated with Scottish Water.
- Surface water will be disposed of in accordance with SUDs requirements with the approval of SEPA and Scottish Water.
- Electricity. This will be provided from the nearest connection and the developer should check with the service provider.
- ICT/Broadband Technology. Broadband is available in Newburgh and any connection will require to be investigated by the occupier.
- Lighting. The provision of additional street lighting along the eastern boundary along the A975 may be required. An element of low lighting

may be appropriate in areas of open space, and consideration should be given to security lighting to improve safety for employees of the employment facility.

- Education facilities. The development will have no significant impact on the schools within the catchment area. This brief allows for education and research facilities on the site.
- Community facilities. Development of this site is unlikely to have a significant impact on these.
- Library facilities. The use of these facilities will not be adversely affected by any development of this site.
- Maintenance. The creation of areas of public open space within the development site may require adoption by the Landscape Services section of the Council. Evidence as to the arrangements made for the long term maintenance of paths, landscaped areas and open spaces will be required along with a planning application and it would be useful to see the landscape proposals at an early stage.

### **3.5 Design**

- Design. Due to the location of this site at the gateway to Newburgh, the layout and design are to be of the highest standards to complement the existing award winning standards of the Oceanlab building to the south. Quality materials should also be used throughout.
- Other design details. A detailed Design Statement explaining the design principles of the development and how these have emerged in relation to the site and its wider context shall be encouraged.
- Building heights. The building(s) should be designed and located to fit well within the site and respect the character of the area. To ensure that new buildings fit well with the landscape, consideration should be given to building heights, particularly to the north east and west of the site.
- Replication of the design and orientation of the existing employment building to the south of the site is preferred.
- Space Standards. Building(s) on the site must meet the current requirements as set out in the adopted Aberdeenshire Local Plan, specifically Appendix 1: The Design of New Development in Aberdeenshire.
- Guidance on the design of new developments can be found in the adopted Aberdeenshire Local Plan, under Policy Gen\2: The Layout, Siting and Design of New Development and Appendix 1: The Design of New Development in Aberdeenshire. Consultation with Aberdeenshire Council's Development Control service is recommended on this matter.

### **3.6 Other Considerations**

- Circular 12/1996: Planning Agreements states planning agreements should be related in scale and kind to the proposed development. Developers may, for example, reasonably be expected to pay for or contribute to the cost of infrastructure which would not have been necessary but for the development. The effect of such infrastructure investment may be to confer some wider benefit but payments should be consistent with the scale of the proposed development.
- The subject of developer contributions should be discussed with the Council's Planning Gain Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity. The agreement may contain contributions in cash or in kind in line with policy requirements. The adopted Local Plan states that in Newburgh, developer contributions may be required for affordable housing, additional public library facilities within the settlement; transportation infrastructure and services, and sustainable travel options within the settlement or at Bridge of Don; and, strategic landscaping and open space provision within the settlement as identified in the plan.
- A phased development is appropriate for this site and this will include the phasing of both buildings and strategic landscaping.

#### **Further Information**

Developers are encouraged to contact the Planning Service of Aberdeenshire Council at the earliest opportunity to discuss details of any application. Any application will be dealt with primarily by the Formartine Area Development Control Team, based at the following address:

Planning and Environmental Services  
45 Bridge Street  
Ellon  
AB41 9AA

Tel: 01358 726429

#### **Other Useful Numbers**

Aberdeenshire Council's Planning	
Gain Co-ordinator	01330 825518
Transportation & Infrastructure	01467 620981
Scottish Water	01224 675000
SEPA	01224 248338
SCARF	01224 213005

## APPENDIX 1

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) form part of the internationally important Natura network of sites. Local Authorities have a duty under UK and European Law to prevent operations or proposals that would damage the integrity of Natura Sites. This places constraints on developments that are likely to have a significant impact on a Natura Site. If a likely significant effect on the SAC is identified by Scottish Natural Heritage, an “Appropriate Assessment” will be required and conducted by the Planning Authority and Scottish Natural Heritage. This will result in one of three outcomes.

Either

- The proposal is incapable of being mitigated sufficiently and a formal objection will be raised by SNH. This will usually result in a recommendation of refusal. Or
- “With mitigation or modification” in place the proposal has no adverse impact. SNH will maintain objection until mitigating conditions or amendments are agreed that will remove the threat of adverse impact. Or
- There is no adverse impact and no mitigation or modification will be required with regards to the Natura Site.

In the light of the expected need for an Appropriate Assessment, any proposal may also need to be accompanied by a statement on the following issues

- A statement of sustainable water use demonstrating that minimal abstracted water will be required and the scale of abstraction this involves.
- A method statement for construction identifying which pollution prevention measures will be employed. Developers should have respect to the Pollution Prevention Guidance (PPG) published by SEPA and in particular PPG 6 “Working at Construction and Demolition Sites”.
- Evidence that sewage will be treated to a standard resulting in no additional loading of the catchment.
- Demonstration that the development will not result in the disturbance of the qualifying interest of the SAC.

Compliance with this brief and the relevant Local Plan policies should help ensure that all developments provide satisfactory measures to prevent adverse impacts on a Natura Site as determined by an Appropriate Assessment.

# APPENDIX 2

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

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

