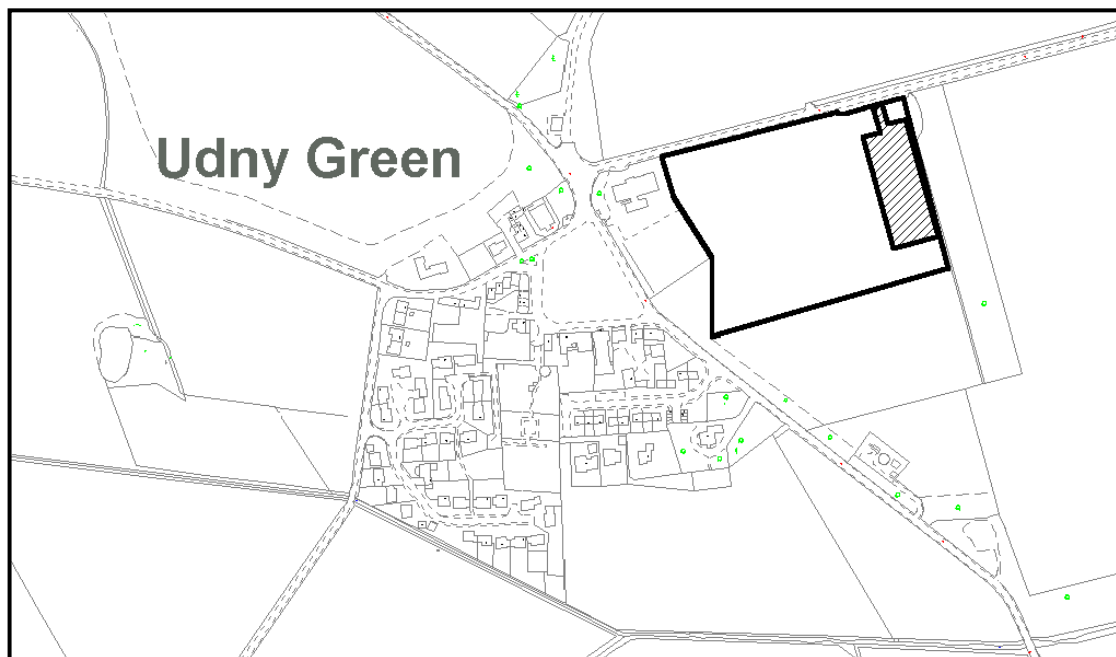


DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR CEMETERY, CAR-PARKING AND HOUSING

OCTOBER 2003



This Brief seeks to ensure that the development of this sensitive site in Udney Green is well structured, appropriate to its surroundings and makes a positive contribution to the area.

Many sites located within towns and villages have been developed with little appreciation either for their landscape setting or the character of the existing settlement. In this particular case, the site is to accommodate a cemetery, car park and small element of housing, totaling no more than 15 units. Udney Green is a picturesque and somewhat unique village in Aberdeenshire and the Council wishes to encourage a sensitive development of this site in a way that not only respects, but also enhances the quality of the environment.

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

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Brief is to provide guidance on how this sensitive site should be developed in line with the relevant planning and design policies and other available guidance. Although not a sizeable site in itself, the creation of 15 additional housing units in this location has the potential to create a significant impact in the village. The provision of a new cemetery and public car park is widely welcomed by the community.

A number of relevant development plan policies require to be satisfied, namely:

NEST	Policy 11	General Housing Considerations
	Policy 13	Developer Contributions
	Policy 17	Countryside and Open Space Access
	Policy 21	Design
Finalised ALP	Policy Env\17	Conservation Areas
	Policy Env\18	Listed Buildings
	Policy Env\22	Public Access
	Policy Hou\13	Public Open Space for Housing
	Policy Inf\2	Parking, Servicing and Accessibility
	Policy Gen\2	The Layout, Siting and Design of New Development
	Policy Gen\3	Developer Contributions
	Policy Gen\5	Landscaping Standards
	Policy Gen\12	Project Areas

2. Site Analysis

A site analysis has been undertaken to identify the site's main features and constraints. This is more than a site description; the following issues will determine the key site requirements to achieve a suitable development in this location.

2.1 Location / setting / views

This site is denoted as Site P in the Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan. The site in its entirety extends to 3.1ha and occupies an area to the east of the existing village directly adjacent to the school. The area is bounded to the north by a small road leading to Pitmedden and to the east by a line of mature trees. The southern edge is not an existing or natural boundary, but delineates the relatively level ground beyond which the slope increases. There are a variety of views into and from the site. To the north across agricultural land, Udney Castle can be seen, whilst from the Conservation Area covering the core of the original village the site can be seen through mature trees. The view to the east is somewhat obscured by the mature trees, but to the south, the site will be easily seen from the surrounding countryside.

2.2 Contours / landform / direction of slope

The area lies on a gentle south-facing slope that falls more steeply at the southern boundary of the site. Around the remainder of the site the ground is relatively level.

2.3 Main direction of wind-chill

The site occupies a predominately exposed south-facing aspect. Studies have shown that the most significant winds come from the west round to the north. Should this be the case on this site the area will be somewhat protected by the mature trees to be found in the area south of the school.

2.4 Natural sun-traps

The site benefits from the exposed aspect to the south that affords the opportunity to capitalise on maximum sun exposure. There are no natural or built features around or on the site that will cause significant shading throughout the summer months.

2.5 Flooding / potential for flooding

There is no history or known potential for flooding on this site.

2.6 Burns / wetland / natural drainage

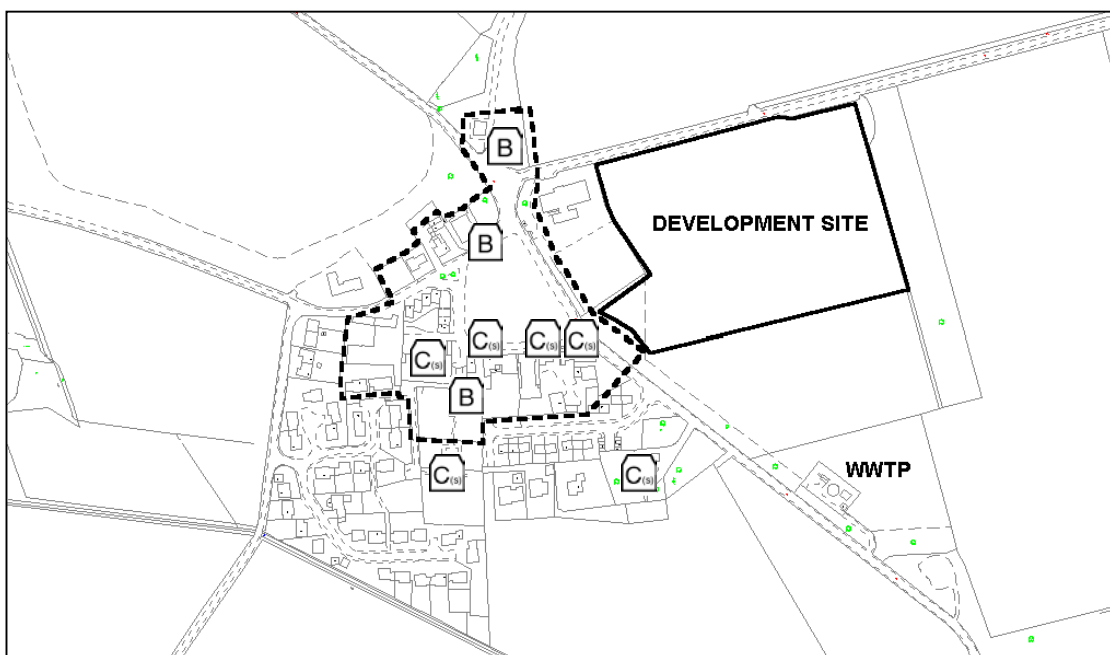
There are no burns or areas of wetland present on or immediately adjacent to the site. The gradient of the site will however allow effective drainage solutions to be pursued.

2.7 SSSI's / nature reserves / area's of ecological diversity

There are no such designations affecting the development of the site.

2.8 Trees / hedges / boundaries

Within the boundary of the site, the main stand of woodland is to be found in the corner directly to the south of the school. However, mature tree specimens are to be found at various locations around the site. The northern boundary is currently defined by a traditional drystone dyke with occasional trees.



Map One

2.9 Archaeological aspects

There is no known archaeological value to the site.

2.10 Urban form or 'grain' / density

Udny Green is a fairly unique village in Aberdeenshire in that recent building has been kept to a minimum and the historic core of the village is centred on a traditional green. This has created a range of building sizes and irregular plots fronting on the green with more modern housing in a cul-de-sac to the south and south west. The grain of the older development is varied with the more recent development lower density and curvilinear.

2.11 Conservation Areas / Listed Buildings

The historic core of the village, church and Udny Castle gate lodge are all included within the Conservation Area as shown by the dotted line in Map One. A number of Listed Buildings are also to be found in close proximity to the site, with 'A' listed Udny Castle less than 300m to the north.

2.12 Other civic / attractive buildings

There are no other significant civic buildings of character in the village, although a number of attractive private residences are to be found within the settlement boundary that are not listed.

2.13 Other elements that give the site character

Apart from the key issues mentioned above, the site is characterised by the predominately rural setting and village atmosphere of quiet, traffic-free roads and open space.

2.14 Known hazards

The historical use of the site has been agricultural, therefore contamination is unlikely, but this must be confirmed.

2.15 Location or direction of local services

The school is immediately adjacent to the site earmarked for development, with the church a short distance beyond. The village hall and Udny Green Hotel are located on the south side of the green. The larger settlement of Pitmedden is a short distance away to the north east along the road to the north of the site.

2.16 Rights of way / wayleaves / pedestrian desire lines

An established pedestrian circuit, the Udny Community Walk takes a circular route from the village, along the road to the north of the site and down the east side of the current agricultural field. This continues to the south of the site, returning to the main road in the area of the sewage treatment plant.

2.17 Existing road pattern

The area around the village green is served by a narrow road, whilst a number of other roads exist as minor routes that leave the village in all directions. The two more recent developments are of a more modern configuration of cul-de-sac's. No roads currently exist on the site.

2.18 Public transport

The public bus service visits the village about nine times a day during the week although this becomes less frequent at the weekend with eight stops on a Saturday, but only one stop on a Sunday. No other form of public transport serves the village.

2.19 Water supply and public drainage

There is a water supply nearby but, at present, the waste water treatment plant for foul drainage is at operating capacity.

2.20 Electricity / gas / renewable energy

It is not envisaged that there would be any problem with the supply of electricity or gas on the site, although no provision is currently made for renewable energy in the village.

2.21 ICT / Broadband availability

At present there is no trigger set for the Udney Exchange to enable Broadband in the area.

2.22 Recent history of the site

This site was primarily created to facilitate the provision of badly needed community facilities and allow the village to expand in line with local plan policy of small-scale growth in Rural Service Centres. The construction of a cemetery and a public car park adjacent to the school are to be provided by the housing developer as agreed by Formartine Area Committee. The Planning Service has recently received an application for this site. The allocation of the site in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan resulted in only two objections, which are concerned with ensuring that the three key elements (cemetery, car park and housing) are delivered together.

2.23 Land ownership

The site is in the ownership of Udney & Dudwick Estates and can be developed subject to the necessary planning permission.

3. Site Requirements

The allocation of this site for the creation of a cemetery, car park and construction of 15 houses offers the opportunity to provide facilities that the community desires and badly needs. The housing element, being small scale, creates an opportunity for an innovative and high standard of design to be displayed on the site as the village deserves.

3.1 General approach

The Council wishes to encourage all new development in Aberdeenshire to add to the quality of the built and natural environment, whilst providing economic and social benefits wherever possible. These principles are carried forward in current work on development and sustainability indicators in the form of the Index 21 project, with new emphasis on 'scoring' proposed projects and determining their sustainability. There are six basic principles which prospective developers must consider:

- Working with the climate
- Energy efficiency
- Optimising resources
- Respect for users
- Respect for the site
- The Complete Approach

3.1.1 Response to climate

There are two main issues when considering how a site should respond to the climate, these are:

- Solar considerations – the site occupies a south-facing aspect and the proposed dwellings should therefore be designed to take advantage of any available solar radiation and maximise heating gain.
- Wind considerations – the presence or absence of wind may have a greater impact than solar gain in the heating of buildings, particularly during colder

months. The use of strategic planting is perhaps the most effective method of reducing the impact of wind blowing across the site.

3.1.2 Energy efficiency

Any development should be encouraged to increase the level of insulation within the walls and roof in an effort to minimise energy use. Another key consideration must be the choice of fuel, which can have an impact on the houses and their layout.

3.1.3 Resource efficiency

The development of this site will require a small section of road and car parking; this must be minimised to that which is necessary. No buildings are currently present onsite, but the existing drystone dyke on the northern boundary will provide an attractive edge and must be retained, but can be repaired or repositioned as necessary. The use of energy efficient, low maintenance and sustainable materials will be encouraged whenever practicable.

3.1.4 Social sustainability

The site is well located to take advantage of the few facilities the village has to offer and easy pedestrian access can be created to link the site to the village centre. The proposed development is of a scale that, if designed properly, should help create a small community and a sense of place.

3.1.5 Biodiversity

The site is currently in agricultural use for crops which is a suitable and attractive habitat for a number of species. The mature trees around the boundary will also attract a variety of bird life. As part of the development, properly and sympathetically designed open space will be required; which will enhance the site once developed.

Many of these elements, and others, are described in detail in the document 'Development Within Nature' published by the former Gordon District Council and Robert Gordon University.

3.2 Distribution of land-uses

The key land uses expected as a result of the development of this site are; a cemetery, car park, housing and open space. The correct mix and layout of these uses will significantly determine the success or otherwise of any development.

3.2.1 Cemetery

The provision of additional lairs in a new cemetery is one of the key drivers for the development of this site. The Council has seen the need to submit a 'Notice of Intention to Develop' to Formartine Area Committee due to the urgency of the demand for burial plots. The location of this land use is therefore predetermined, although it will in no way prejudice the remaining elements of the development.

3.2.2 Car park

The requirement for car parking to serve the new cemetery and also for the use of the nearby primary school is the other key driver to development on this site. In order to satisfy these demands it will need to be sensibly located and a position in the north west of the site would appear to be the most satisfactory solution.

3.2.3 Open space

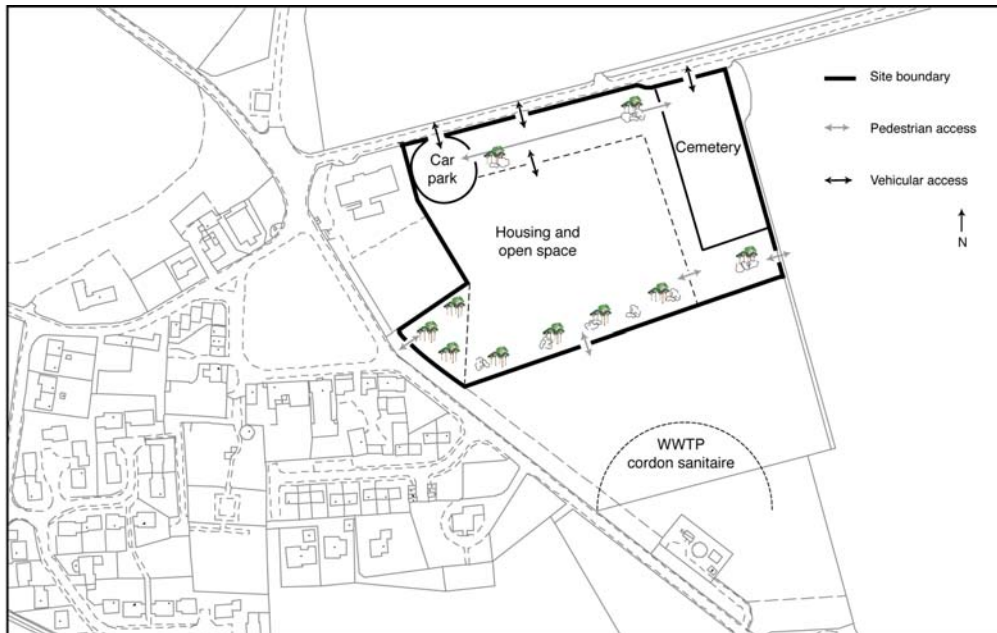
The framework of open space is in many respects determined by the other elements described above. A link will be required between the cemetery and the car park and a corridor of open space would allow a path to extend along the north part of the site.

This space would also provide a buffer and attractive screen as one enters the development. Other areas of open space will be required throughout the site and it is important that these are well thought out, have a clear purpose and are not simply land that is left over from the housing layout.

This is a relatively large site and the number of housing units are set at 15, thus allowing a low density development and the opportunity to capitalise on open space provision. There may be some merit in pursuing a central open area to reflect the character of the existing village green. The creation of a further buffer alongside the cemetery's western boundary would ensure the privacy of the cemetery and provide an opportunity to allow public access through the site.

3.2.4 Housing

The location of the 15 housing units proposed would be best located in the central area of the site, leading down to a landscaped southern boundary. The mature trees to the south of the school provide some screening from the Conservation Area and the open space framework discussed above will direct housing towards the centre.



Map Two

3.2.5 Green corridors

The provision of open space and strategic planting alongside the cemetery will leave a corridor separated from the housing component of the site. This would be suitable for the movement of wildlife across the site.

3.2.6 Strategic landscaping

The design and layout of the site must consider the surrounding landscape and new planting should therefore reflect the form of the existing shelterbelts, hedgerows and individual trees. The need for landscaping is greatest in the buffer between the housing and the cemetery, which should result in an avenue of trees between the two uses and an attractive walk. The amenity area on the northern part of the site should have a more informal design and layout with occasional planting and again an attractive route from the car park to the cemetery could be created. The boundary on the eastern side of the cemetery would benefit from additional planting, either in the site or within the existing shelterbelt. Finally, the car park shall require the planting of trees and shrubs to soften the area and avoid an expanse of tarmac. In all cases, planting should attempt to reflect the open rural character of the site. Where trees

already exist on or adjacent to the site, every precaution must be taken to develop the area without detriment to these trees or their root systems.

Advice from the Environment section of the Council suggests that native species such as Common Alder, Hawthorn, Hornbeam and Field Maple as the most suitable species to be planted, with larger examples of Ash and Wych Elm in appropriate locations.

An indicative land use proposal map (Map Two) is shown above, to demonstrate how the development may proceed to best meet the site requirements.

3.3 Access

This site must be widely accessible by pedestrians or cyclists from the village. Other modes of transport are less well represented, but it is important that any development of this site gives priority to pedestrians and creates a safe addition to the village.

3.3.1 Footpath access into the site

Footpath creation is a key requirement to make the site as accessible as possible and to encourage use of modes of transport other than private car. The Udney Community Walk takes a circular route from the village along the road to the north of the site. For greater safety, it is proposed that this walk enter the site by the car park and follow the path through the area of open space thus avoiding the road. Other pedestrian access points should be created to the south of the cemetery and also south of the school, giving a direct link with the village green. Safety measures may have to be considered at this last location, the T&I service can provide advice on this matter.

3.3.2 Points of road access into the site

Because of the three key components of the site, car park, housing and cemetery, there will be a need for vehicular access to each of these uses. These will all need to be taken from the road at the north of the site as shown in Map Two.

3.3.3 Access links to undeveloped land

It is important that the development of this site can be achieved with a 'stand-alone' road layout. The land to the south of the site is partly constrained by the cordon sanitaire associated with the waste water treatment plant (WWTP).

3.3.4 General road layout requirements

The scale of the development within the remainder of the site, once car park and cemetery have been accommodated, would traditionally suggest a linear arrangement of cul-de-sac's. However, a more innovative approach to the use of the land would be favoured and a layout incorporating a 'home zone' and possibly an area of central open space should be considered.

3.3.5 Traffic calming and other standards

Traffic calming will be required at the point where traffic will enter the housing component of the site from the main road. At this section a walkway is likely to cross the road and the safety of pedestrians must be given the highest priority. Within the housing area itself, the use of a 'home zone' should be given full consideration.

3.3.6 Public transport needs

There would be no additional need for public transport to serve the development, provided that easy access is made to the village green where the local halts are to be found.

3.3.7 Emergency and service needs

All emergency and service needs will be accommodated by internal access roads to be constructed in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Officer and the Council's T&I service.

3.3.8 Access for all

Public access to the housing will be encouraged through a variety of footpaths. Every effort should be made to make these points as accessible as possible to a wide range of potential users, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.

3.3.9 Parking requirements

The number of parking spaces contained within the new car park must accord with the adopted 'Car Parking Standards for Development Control'. Provision must also be made for a number of visitor spaces and disabled allocations that should be located nearest to the entrance. Provision should also be made beside the cemetery entrance for some off-street parking.

3.4 Infrastructure and other service facilities

3.4.1 Drainage

The disposal of additional foul water in Udney Green is currently embargoed due to the WWTP having reached capacity. Any development would require the upgrading of this facility before Scottish Water / SEPA would consent.

3.4.2 Supply and distribution of water

All water will be supplied from a nearby public water main.

3.4.3 Electricity

This will be supplied from the nearest connection, check with service provider.

3.4.4 ICT / Broadband technology

The Udney exchange is yet to receive the required level of interest for Broadband enablement, current figures from BT suggest only about 50% of the trigger level have registered. This does not prevent the necessary infrastructure being put in place for future use.

3.4.5 Lighting

The provision of additional street lighting will be necessary due to the development of this site, however, this should be rationalised. An element of low-level lighting may be appropriate in some areas of public open space.

3.4.6 Education facilities

The development is likely to increase the number of children attending Udney Green School where there is sufficient capacity to absorb any potential new pupils. Secondary school age pupils will travel to the new Meldrum Academy in Oldmeldrum where spaces also exist.

3.4.7 Community facilities

Udney Green has few facilities, although a hotel, church and village hall serve the village. The demand on these is unlikely to be significantly increased as a result of the development.

3.4.8 Library facilities

The nearest library is to be found in Pitmedden, a facility that is in need of upgrading.

3.4.9 Other facilities

There are no other facilities of note within Udny Green.

3.4.10 Maintenance

The creation of significant areas of public open space within this development will result in these requiring adoption by the Landscape Services section of the Council. Evidence as to the arrangements made for the long-term maintenance of the paths, landscaped areas and open spaces will be required.

3.5 Developer Contributions

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 kind in line with policy requirements.

3.6 Design

The site layout, scale and mix of uses offer an opportunity to create a truly exemplary development unlike the common, mundane approach to urban extensions. Due to the existing character of the village and the central Conservation Area, every care must be taken to ensure that both the layout and design are of the highest standards and quality materials are used throughout.

3.6.1 Building heights

The nearby buildings give the best impression of the most appropriate height of any new houses on this site. Within the central Green area, most houses are traditional single or 1.5 storey structures and this should be replicated in any new-build. Depending on the eventual layout chosen, there may be good reason to restrict housing overlooking the Green to single storey. However, should landscaping or distance obscure the new buildings, this may increase to 1.5 storeys. Two storey dwellings will not be permitted under any circumstances, although depending on their position within the site, 1.75 storey may be acceptable. All houses must be designed and located to fit well within the site, respect the character of the surroundings and minimise intrusion on their neighbours.

3.6.2 Housing and space standards

Houses on the site must meet, or preferably exceed, the current requirements as set out in the Local Plan, specifically Appendix 1 (The design of new development in Aberdeenshire) and Appendix 6 (Provision of public open space).

3.6.3 Design details

Any potential developer shall be encouraged to produce a detailed Design Statement explaining the design principles of the development and how these have emerged in response to the site and its wider context. Careful consideration of the materials to be used will also need to be given, consultation with Development Control is recommended on this matter.

In order to achieve a more interesting street scene for the development and to reflect the original core of the village, certain measures should be incorporated. These may include the possibility of detaching a number of garages from the houses, mixing house types and varying the distance of buildings from the front boundary of the plots.

4. 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 & Building Control
Neil Ross Square
45 Bridge Street
Ellon
AB41 9AA

Tel. 01358 726429
Fax. 01358 723548

Other useful numbers:

Transportation & Infrastructure 01467 620981

Scottish Water 01224 675237

SEPA 01224 424609

COMMITTEE RESPONSE – OCTOBER 2003

3. DRAFT PLANNING DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR CEMETERY, CAR PARK AND HOUSING IN UDNY GREEN

The Committee had before them a report by the Head of Planning, Policy and Environment seeking Members' consideration of a Draft Planning Development Brief for a site allocated for a cemetery, car park and housing that accords with the proposals in the Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan at Udney Green. The Committee **resolved**

1. **to approve** the content of this Draft Development Brief;
2. **to agree** that reference to Index 21 should be included in the Brief; and
3. **to recommend** to the Infrastructure Services Committee that the status of Index 21 should be formalised.