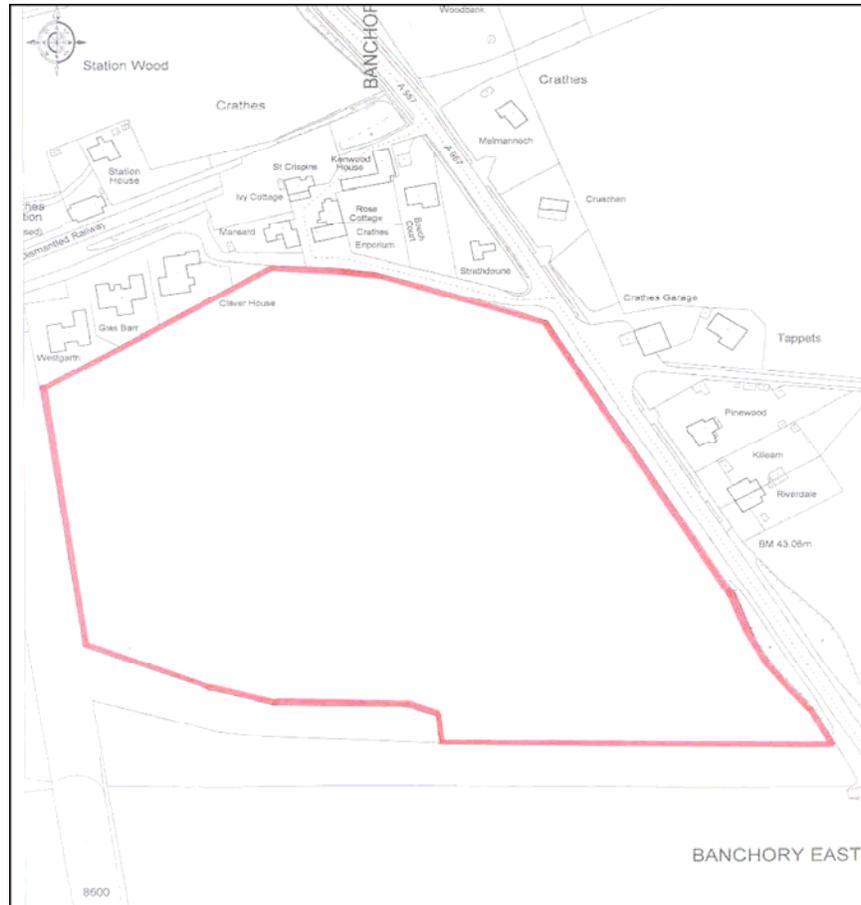


PLANNING BRIEF FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

CRATHES

SEPTEMBER 2006



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

- This brief is for residential development and has scope for around 45 units as identified in the Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan. This brief seeks to ensure that the development of this sensitive site is well structured, appropriate to its surroundings and makes a positive contribution to the area.
- Developers must have regard to the contents of this Brief in preparing their scheme. Where differences do occur, justification by the developer is required.

1.2 Constraints and limitations

- Crathes enjoys a unique location within Aberdeenshire and the site sits north of the River Dee, which is a Special Area of Conservation.
- The opportunity to develop this site has been identified through the Local Plan process. The council and the landowners wish to encourage the sensitive development of this prominent site in a way that respects and enhances the quality of the environment, and an appropriate level of Affordable Housing should be provided.

1.3 Relevant development plan policies

- **NEST**

Policy 8: Housing Allocations 2000-2005
Policy 9: Housing Allocations 2006-2010
Policy 11: General Housing Considerations
Policy 13: Developer Contributions
Policy 14: Affordable and Special Needs Housing
Policy 19: Wildlife, Landscape and Land Resources
Policy 21: Design

- **Aberdeenshire Local Plan**

Policy Env\5a: Areas of Landscape Significance
Policy Env\9: Forestry & Woodland Creation & Enhancement
Policy Hou\2: Future Housing Land 2006-2015
Policy Hou\8: Affordable Housing
Policy Hou\13: Public Open Space for Housing
Policy Inf\1: Roads & Access
Policy Inf\4a: Foul Drainage Standards
Policy Inf\4b: Surface Water Drainage Standards: SUDS
Policy Gen\2: The Layout, Siting & Design of New Development

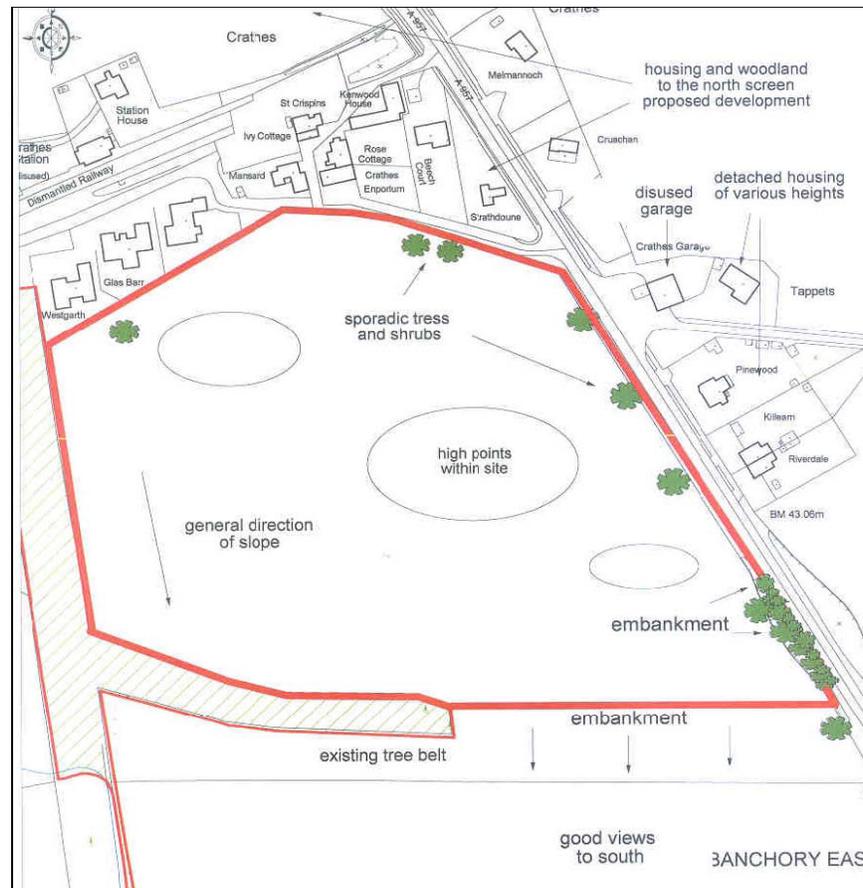
Policy Gen\3: Developer Contributions
Policy Gen\5: Landscaping Standards

- **SPP** Scottish Planning Policy 3: Planning for Housing
- **Circulars** Circular 12/1996: Planning Agreements

Site Analysis

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

Figure 1: Site Analysis



Source: Promap

2.1 Location / setting / views

- Two adjoining sites, in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan, identified as sites A and fh1 are considered suitable for development. Site A is a Policy 8 site suitable for development in the period 2000 – 2005, and

site fh1 is suitable for development in the period 2006 – 2010, in total for around 45 houses.

- The conjoined sites extend to 5.5 hectares and lie to the South West of the village of Crathes. Due to the timing of the development it would be preferable that any application should address the overall site.
- The site is bound to the East by the A957 to Stonehaven, with housing beyond, to the South by an existing tree belt and agricultural land, to the West by a band of trees and to the North by housing and access roads.
- There are attractive views from the site to the south toward the River Dee. The existing woodland and housing limit any views into the site on the approach from the north.
- The site generally enjoys a southerly aspect, sloping from north to south, however the landform of the site is undulating with knolls, or hummocks. There is a more prominent embankment to the South-East and South of the site, which marks a change in topography to the lower land adjacent to the River Dee.

2.2 Climatic Considerations

- The site is located well inland from the North Sea. The site is sheltered to the south-west and west by the location of the existing tree belt, and to the north and partly to the east from existing development, which gives protection from the north westerly winds.
- The site benefits from the exposed aspect to the south that affords the opportunity to capitalise on maximum sun exposure.
- Some shading will occur from the existing mature woodland to the west of the site.

2.3 Potential hazards

- A flood study has been carried out, which has confirmed that the site lies outwith the 1:200 year flood contour.
- The present and historical use of the site has been agricultural. Therefore, contamination is extremely unlikely on site.

2.4 Ecological Considerations

- The site falls within an area of landscape significance, as identified by the Aberdeenshire Local Plan. This covers the majority of the Marr Area, within which Crathes falls. The highest standards of design in terms of location, scale, siting, aesthetics and landscaping will be required in this area.
- The River Dee Special Area of Conservation lies to the south of the site. It is identified as such by Scottish Natural Heritage for

freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon and otter. This designation obliges all public organisations to undertake their responsibilities in a way that avoids any deterioration of the habitats of the species for which the site is designated. Adequate measures will require to be taken to preserve this special area of conservation. Developers are encouraged to include in any detailed proposals, methods of sewage treatment which will prevent any increase in nutrient inputs to the River Dee; and measures to minimise water consumption.

- The whole area falls within an area identified by NESBReC (North-East Scotland Biological Records Centre) as FW21: River Dee and Tributaries. This is a non-statutory designation which arises from the Study of Environmental Sensitive Areas. FW stands for freshwater and the River Dee is considered by NESBReC as “a classic example of an upland river”. The river lies to the south of the site at a distance of some 330 metres from the proposed housing development.
- There are no areas of wetland on the site. The natural contours of the site will allow suitable measures to be implemented to drain surface water from the development.
- It is likely that an assessment of the implications of the proposal will have to be undertaken before any development commences. Works should be undertaken in accordance with SEPA’s Pollution, Prevention Guidelines.
- The site is bound by an existing timber post and wire fence with scattered trees and bushes to the north and east of the site. There is existing woodland to the west and partly to the south of the site. This woodland provides character to the site and should not suffer any detriment as a result of development.
- There is scope to extend the woodland along the embankment to the south to the point where it reaches the Stonehaven Road. This would soften the impact of any proposed development on the site and act as a defensible boundary to the proposed housing. There are significant areas of trees and woodland throughout the settlement of Crathes. The retention of the woodland to the south and further planting will enable any new development to merge with and complement the existing established character of the village.
- The site presently comprises agricultural land, in use for grazing, and as such, there are no trees within the site boundary that would require to be felled to accommodate any proposed development.

2.5 Urban Context

- There is no known archaeological value to the site. However, owing to the proximity of prehistoric material recovered from adjacent fields to the south and the location of the site on a river terrace, it is possible that there are archaeological remains within the site.

Therefore, prior to any development, a programme of archaeological works, including evaluations may be required.

- The site currently represents the southern limit of the village. The urban form of Crathes consists of a mix of both traditional and modern architectural styles, comprising single, one and a half, one and three quarter and two storey buildings. Dwellings in the surrounding area are detached and situated in large grounds. The density in the vicinity of the site is low.
- Crathes is a fairly compact, well established, prosperous area. However, the village has no defined centre and has grown around the main thoroughfares of the village, namely the A93 North Deeside Road and the A957 Stonehaven Road. This gives it a slightly scattered layout.
- The character of the site is defined by the existing woodland to the south west and west of the site, which would contain and enhance any proposed development.

2.6 Access

- The Deeside Way is a path network, which runs from Aberdeen to Ballater and passes through Crathes and a route through Crathes on which work is due to start during this financial year has been identified and is shown on Figure 2. However, the possibility of rerouting the section which utilises the existing vehicle access to the houses to the north of the site so that it avoids them entirely, should be considered.
- No roads currently exist on the site. The A957 Stonehaven Road runs along the eastern boundary. A road bounding the site to the north provides access to the housing in that area.
- There is a frequent, daily bus service running from Aberdeen to Banchory, stopping at Crathes. It runs half hourly from Monday to Saturday and every two hours on a Sunday. There are bus stops on the A93, North Deeside Road, approximately 150 metres to the north, going in both directions.

2.7 Utilities and other services

- In respect of the provision of a water supply, there would appear to be sufficient capacity to serve any development on this site and this has been confirmed by Scottish Water. There is mains water close to the site, but a mains extension is likely to be required to service any proposed development.
- A new sewage treatment plant is required to service future development. An area to the south-east corner of the site has been identified for the location of this which is close to an existing access

from the public road. It lies clear of the floodplains and is capable of discharging to the River Dee.

- It is not envisaged that there would be any problem with the supply of electricity on the site, however, there is currently no gas provision in Crathes. No provision is currently made for renewable energy in the village.
- It is understood that Broadband is available in some areas of Crathes.
- The nearest services are located in Banchory to the west of Crathes approximately 5km away. A primary school is located in the Crathes Estate to the west of the village, which is identified by Aberdeenshire Council School Roll Forecasts (2003 based) as having a falling school roll between 2005 and 2011. Crathes has a well used village hall. However the village formerly had a garage, railway station, a post office and an Emporium, which have all been forced into closure.

2.8 Other considerations

- Part of the site was originally zoned in the Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan as site A suitable for 15 houses, with future housing land proposed immediately to the south and identified as site fh1 for 15 houses. A further site fh2, also for 15 houses, was identified on the land to the east of the Slug Road. This has since been amended with the extension of site fh1 to incorporate site fh2. Fh2 has also been replaced with a fh2* designation, which denotes its potential for development in the period post 2010. The overall site is therefore suitable for around 45 houses (2000-2010), including strategic landscaping, which will comprise the extension to the existing woodland. This extension of the woodland will contain and visually screen any development.
- The site is presently in the single ownership of Dunecht Estates and can be developed subject to the necessary planning permission.

2.9 Conclusions

- The development of this site provides an opportunity to round off the village of Crathes, support new facilities in the village, including the existing primary school, or to bring previous services back into use.
- As this site will create the southern gateway to Crathes, a high standard of design is to be expected. Care should be taken to ensure that development is compatible with the neighbouring residential area.
- Every effort should be made to retain and exploit the site's topography because of the interest and character this imparts.

obtained from Lynne Reid, the Index 21 Project Manager at the Scott Sutherland School, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen, or by visiting www.index21.org.uk.

3.2 Layout

- Solar considerations. The site occupies a south facing aspect and can therefore take advantage of available solar radiation in the proposed buildings. The proposed dwellings should therefore be designed to take advantage of available solar radiation to 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, embankments and lowering buildings into the site is an effective method of reducing the impact of wind blowing across the site, therefore, reducing the amount of heat loss.
- Energy. The developer should aim to achieve at least some of the energy use in the development from renewable sources. Consideration should be given to the minimisation of any environmental impact of the development through, for example, measures to minimise energy and water consumption; the use of sustainable sourced or recycled materials during construction; or, small scale renewable energy installations where appropriate. A statement on renewable energy technologies considered should be submitted with the proposals and reasons given for any rejected. A series of flow charts are attached at Appendix 1 to aid this consideration. The advice of 'SCARF' may also be useful in this respect and any suitable grants can be discussed with them.
- Resource efficiency. Scottish Planning Policy 3: Housing highlights that the efficient use of land is an important planning aim. High density development can be achieved through good design without overcrowding, congestion or loss of residential amenity. This is supported through NEST Policy 11: General Housing Considerations which outlines that Local Plans must ensure that housing developments make a positive contribution to sustaining the community in which they are located through the use of appropriate densities.
- No buildings currently exist on site for the reuse of materials. However, sand and gravel excavated from the site could potentially be used for the development of the site. There is an existing drystone dyke to the south of the site, which will provide an attractive boundary and should be retained. The use of energy efficient, low maintenance and sustainable materials will be encouraged whenever practicable. All surface water will be disposed of using SUDS.

- Biodiversity. The possible effects of the proposal on badger and red squirrel should be considered prior to development. Planning proposals associated with the development should not facilitate the spread of grey squirrels. The site already has a considerable amount of mature trees along its western boundary. The strategic planting and extension to the existing woodland, which is proposed to the south of the site, will encourage a range of flora and fauna. This planting will provide shelter-belts, which will further encourage biodiversity. The planting of native species in scale with the development is an important consideration. Within the development, properly and sympathetically designed open space and strategic landscaping will be required. This will provide further opportunity for low level planting and increased varieties of flora and fauna, which will enhance the site once developed. Further advice for landscape design guidance 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. Developers are strongly recommended to refer to this.
- Respect for users. The proposed development is of a scale that, with appropriate design will help to create a small community. Development can help sustain the limited facilities in the village and can encourage the introduction of new facilities and services. The rural location affords easy access to the surrounding countryside for leisure and recreation purposes.
- A 'sense of place' could be generated by the design and impact of the entrance to the development along the eastern boundary and the creation of an inner area of open space central to the development.

3.3 Distribution of Land Uses

- The key land uses expected as part of this development are, housing, open space and strategic landscaping should exploit the site's topographical features to the full. The correct mix and layout of these uses will significantly determine the success or otherwise of any development.
- Housing. The layout of housing within the site requires to be given detailed consideration. In general houses should be sited in the troughs between the higher ground so that the hummocks will impede direct line of sight between as many windows as possible.
- A generous site area is identified extending to 5.5 hectares or thereby. Allowing for a range of house-types and densities, this site could accommodate around 45 units as allocated in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan and round off the village to the south.

- The exact capacity of the site can only be established through detailed design having regard to plot size and open space standards required through the Local Plan. Housing sites should be developed in a way that maximises their potential and at a density that is appropriate to individual locations and sites.
- Capacities stated in the Local Plan should be considered indicative rather than prescriptive. This is supported by SPP3 and NEST, which encourages sustainable development through maximising the use of land. NEST Policy 11: General Housing Considerations also outlines that new developments should offer a choice of residential environments and house types. It further states that every effort must be made to ensure that a full range of market sectors is catered for in all localities.
- There is scope to create an attractive housing development through capitalising on the undulating landform of the site.
- Open space. It is important that any open space has a clear purpose and function, and is not simply left over space after the housing has been designed. There may be some justification in having a central area of open space to reflect the existing protected area of open space in the village. Appendix 6 of The Finalized Aberdeenshire Local Plan provides further guidance on the provision of public open space in new developments.
- Landscaping. The need for landscaping is greatest along the southern boundary. Planting in this area will not interfere with the housing proposed and will soften the impact of development when viewed from the southern approach on the A957 Stonehaven Road. A carefully designed landscaping scheme for the site will be required.

3.4 Access

- It is important that any development on this site creates a safe addition to the village, while being accessible by all forms of transport, in particular pedestrians and cyclists.
- There is an existing path outwith the boundary of the site, which will soon be developed as part of the Deeside Way, which could be linked to the development of this site, but the possibility of bringing a section of the Deeside Way into the northern margin of the proposed site, or otherwise redirecting it, should be explored with Aberdeenshire Council's officials responsible for the Deeside Way path network. The creation of a 1.8 metre wide footpath along the eastern boundary of the site adjacent to the existing road will be required to comply with road standards.
- Due to the number of dwellings proposed on this site, it is anticipated that a single access for up to 50 units will be required from the A957. The effect of additional traffic exiting onto this road, as a result of the residential development, must be considered to ensure that road

safety is not compromised. No individual properties should take access directly from the A957.

- Footpath links through the site must be considered to link any development to the wider area.
- Concern has been expressed that the increase in traffic the development will generate will impact negatively on road safety over the stretch of the A957 the Brief site fronts, and it has been suggested that a speed limit might be introduced . Speed limits are governed by regulation and are introduced in response to actual rather than conjectural need. The Council's Transportation & Infrastructure Service will assess the situation when detailed plans are lodged/approved, and will impose an appropriate limit should such be deemed necessary.
- Part of the site is constrained for development due to the requirement for a cordon sanitaire around the sewage treatment works. A suitable area has been identified by engineers and this is addressed in section 3.5 on drainage.
- There is no need for an extensive road network within the site, however two points of access may be required to serve the development. A more innovative approach to road layouts would be favoured and a layout incorporating a 'home zone' and an area of central open space should be considered.
- Traffic calming is a fundamental element of the 'home zone' concept, where pedestrians are given priority over vehicles. Traffic calming and road requirements should be employed as advised through consultation with the Transport & Infrastructure Department of Aberdeenshire Council.
- No alteration to the public transport provision would be required to serve the development as the nearest bus stop is located approximately 150 metres to the north of the site.
- 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 the Roads Authority.
- Every effort should be made to make the site as accessible as possible to a wide range of potential users, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.
- Car parking must accord with the Council's adopted 'Car Parking Standards for Development Control'.

3.5 Infrastructure & Other Services

- Drainage. A new foul drainage system should be provided for the site, constructed to a standard adoptable by Scottish Water. A new sewage treatment plant is required to service future development. An area to the south-east corner of the site has been identified for the

location of this. It lies close to an existing access from the public road, and is clear of the floodplain.

- Supply and distribution of water. There would appear to be sufficient capacity to serve any development on this site. There is mains water close to the site, but a mains extension is likely to be required to service any proposed development.
- Electricity. This will be supplied from the nearest connection and the developer should check with the service provider.
- ICT/Broadband Technology. It is understood that there is Broadband availability in some areas of Crathes.
- Lighting. The provision of additional street lighting will be necessary due to the development of this site. An element of low-level lighting may be appropriate in some areas of public open space.
- Educational facilities. The development of this site for housing will help sustain the local primary school, where the school roll is forecast to fall from 67% of capacity in 2005 to 39% in 2011. The forecast roll for Banchory Academy is above the capacity there and developers should seek information on the up to date position.
- Community facilities. The only existing community facility in Crathes at the moment is the public hall. Development of this site may create a demand for additional facilities. Prior to any development of the site, discussions should be held with Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Gain Co-ordinator.
- Library facilities. The nearest library is to be found in Banchory. However, Aberdeenshire Council operate a mobile library service which stops in Crathes every second Wednesday.
- Other facilities. There is a protected area of woodland in the village, lying between the former railway and the A93. This is used for informal recreation purposes.
- Maintenance. The creation of public open space within this development will result in these areas requiring adoption by the Landscape Services section of Aberdeenshire Council. Evidence as to the arrangements made for the long-term maintenance of any paths, landscaped areas and open spaces will be required.

3.6 Design

- Design. Due to the existing well settled, prosperous character of the village, every care must be taken to ensure that both the layout and design are of the highest standards and quality materials which should reflect local traditions in terms of layout, built form and proportion should be used throughout.
- It should be noted that the site's topographical variation offers some scope for split-level development which, appropriately (i.e sparingly) applied, could enhance the general ambience.

- Building heights. The residential buildings should be designed and located to fit well within the site, respect the character of the surrounding area and minimise intrusion on neighbouring properties. Buildings should also respect the topography of the site.
- An appropriate level of play facilities for children will be required.
- Housing and Space Standards. Houses on the site must meet the current requirements as set out in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan, specifically Appendix 1 (The Design of New Development in Aberdeenshire) and Appendix 6 (Provision of Public Open Space).
- 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 will be encouraged.
- Guidance on the design of new developments can be found in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan, under Policy Gen\2 (The Layout, Siting & Design of New Development) and Appendix 1 (The Design of New Development in Aberdeenshire). Further guidance on this can be found in PAN 67 (Housing Quality). Consultation with Development Control service is recommended on this matter.

3.7 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 kind in line with policy requirements. The Aberdeenshire Local Plan states that in Crathes, developer contributions may be required for transportation infrastructure and services, including sustainable travel options within the settlement or at Banchory; secondary school provision at Banchory; and health care facilities serving the settlement.
- There will be a requirement for affordable housing. This will most likely be in the category of housing without subsidy, maintained as affordable units over the longer term (in the terms of PAN 74 Affordable Housing). Details of the requirement will be provided to developers at the time of making a planning application or pre-application inquiry.

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 Marr Area Development Control Team, based at the following address:

Planning & Building Control
Viewmount
Arduthie Road
Stonehaven
Aberdeenshire
AB39 2DQ
Tel: 01569 768271/27
Fax: 01569 766549

Other Useful Numbers:

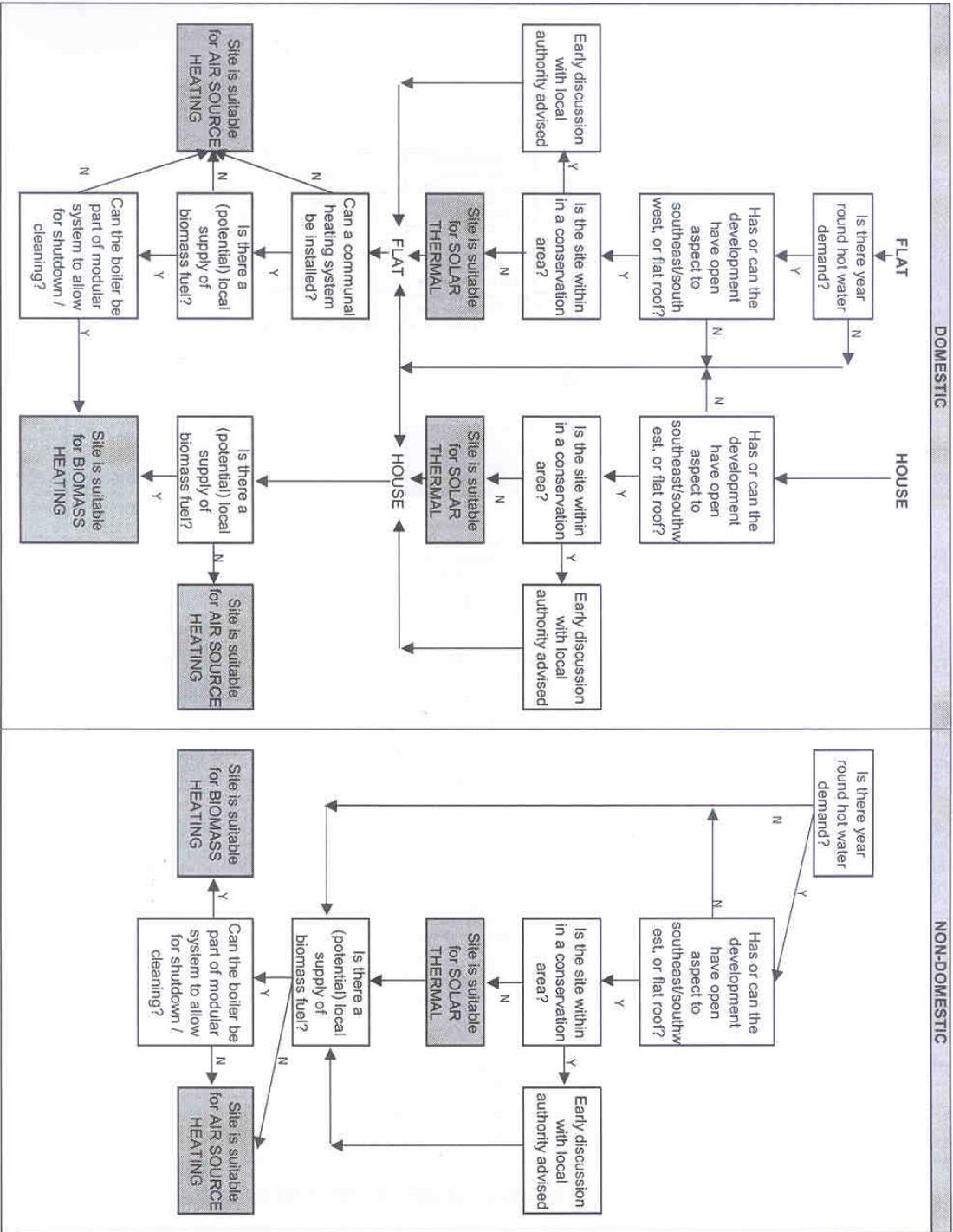
Aberdeenshire Council's
Planning Gain Co-ordinator 01330 825518

Transportation & Infrastructure 01467 620981

Scottish Water 01224 675000

SEPA 01224 248338

SCARF 01224 213005



	Y	N
SOLAR THERMAL		
AIR SOURCE HEATING		
BIOMASS HEATING		

COMMITTEE RESPONSE – SEPTEMBER 2006

4. CRATHES DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 4 April 2006, (Item 9), the Committee had before them a report seeking approval of a revised planning development brief for housing at Crathes. The report indicated that consultation had been undertaken with the Community Council and the general public and the brief had been amended to take account of comments received.

The Policy Planner reported that it was proposed to amend the brief further at (a) paragraph 2.6 (bullet point 1) to read “the Deeside Way as a path network, which runs from Aberdeen to Ballater and passes through Crathes, and a route through Crathes on which work is due to start during the current financial year had been identified and is shown in figure 2. However, the possibility of bringing the section which utilises the existing vehicle access to the houses to the north of the site, so that it avoids them entirely should be considered,” and (b) paragraph 3.4 (bullet point 2) to include the words “or otherwise redirecting it” between the words “of the proposed site” and “should be explored” in the 7th line thereof. The Policy Planner also confirmed that amendments had been made to the Brief as requested by the Community Council relating to the Deeside Way and the possibility of a speed limit being introduced on a Section of the A957.

Following a full discussion on standards of design, traffic calming arrangements, use of sustainable energy resources, figures relating to school capacity, the level of development which could be accommodated within the site, sewage facilities, developer contributions, affordable housing and play facilities, the Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to approve the content of the Development Brief as circulated subject to –
 - (i) the additional amendments to paragraphs 2.6 and 3.4 as recommended by the Head of Service,
 - (ii) paragraph 3.5 (bullet point 6) being amended to more accurately reflect the current position with regard to secondary school provision at Banchory Academy,
 - (iii) including reference to the need to provide affordable housing, preferably long term, as part of the development, and
 - (iv) the provision of appropriate play facilities for children.