

TOWN & VILLAGE STATEMENTS

FINDOCHTY

THE PLANNING BACKGROUND

Apart from individual gap site development, recent private housing in Findochty has been concentrated at Netherton and Dyce Crescent, the latter being the only recently designated private housing site in the town. The Council constructed new housing at Reidhaven Crescent and the Grampian Housing Association development at Hall Street is a useful addition to the 2-apartment housing stock. The population level appears to have stabilised at around 1100, following the decline of the previous 20 years.

The Conservation Area which extends to most of the town has operated quite successfully. Few areas in the town require significant environmental improvements, although a number of properties, particularly at the Hythe area, Duke Street and Main Street are derelict, providing opportunities for regeneration.

The main issue in the last Plan, namely, the constraint on development imposed by an inadequate drainage system, has been remedied by the reorganisation of the town's sewerage system, completed in 1991. Eventually the town's sewage may be pumped to a new Waste Water Works at Buckie.

CHARACTER OF THE TOWN

Two prominent hightop landmarks dominate the town of Findochty - the War Memorial and the Church of Scotland. In common with other coastal towns in the area, the beach, seatown, open braes and cliff-top coastal walkways are other important features. Another significant amenity to the town is the harbour, used principally now for recreational use; it acts as a picturesque focus for the town. Building styles vary from the informal seatown area, the formal planned layout to the west, to the Council schemes around Morven Crescent. More recently, a number of detached suburban style houses have imprinted their mark on the town's character.

Although by-passed from the A98 road, the town has much to offer the visitor - a well contained private caravan site, an attractive harbour area, a golf course to the west and a pleasant beach to the east. A coastal footpath providing links to Portknockie and Buckie passes through the town at its northern end and may form part of a formal access network.

There is no industrial land available but this does not appear to create major difficulties for the town.

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To protect the town's heritage and important visual landmarks such as the harbour area, the braes and the Church setting
- (ii) To ensure that the materials, form and character of new development is compatible with the existing townscape.
- (iii) To increase the role of tourism and recreation in the town and in particular, to retain the harbour in amenity use.
- (iv) To allow for an adequate provision of housing land.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

In addition to the site specific requirements identified below and in development briefs, all developments must meet the terms of the Implementation policies (L/IMP1-8) in Chapter 8 (relating to siting, layout and design, character impact, landscaping, drainage, environmental and traffic impact). Subject to the scale of the development having a measurable impact on local community facilities, amenities or infrastructure, funding policies L/F1 Developer Contributions and L/F2 'Commutated Payments' in Chapter 7 may also apply.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

The Local Plan policies for business development are contained in Chapter 1 'Economic Development'.

Harbour (L/T6)

The cluster of housing around the harbour and the recreational facilities it provides, make this area the focal point for both locals and visitors. Pontoon jetties have been installed in the inner basin to accommodate the demand for mainly pleasure, but also some fishing boats. Over 100 berths are now available, with an active water sports club.

HBR Harbour Area

The harbour will be retained for recreational and general amenity use. The harbour area has been designated to include a boat storage area, which can be accommodated between the new toilets and the West Pier. New development should reflect the marine nature of the harbour and respect the character of the Outstanding Conservation Area.

Opportunity Sites

Opportunity Sites are sites which have the potential for redevelopment for a range of possible uses. The governing local plan policy is L/ED6 in Chapter 1. Other policies may apply depending on the nature of the redevelopment proposal.

OPP1 North Beach

This small secluded area is popular with bathers in the summer and could be upgraded in order to improve the recreational amenity. The adjacent warehouse and its grounds could be converted to a compatible use and a nearby derelict house could also form part of any package to increase the tourist attraction of this area.

TOURISM

The governing policies for Tourism are L/ED16 and 17 in Chapter 1 of the Local Plan (Tourist Facilities and Accommodation and Roadside Signs). The Economic Development policies in Chapter 1 apply where relevant and policy L/CF4 in Chapter 5 safeguards established routes for walking, cycling, trails and cross-country skiing.

T1 Caravan Site

The caravan site will be contained within its present boundaries, although the need to expand will be monitored. Signposting from the main A98 is required. Public footpaths links through the site must be retained.

T2 Coastal Footpath

The Council is in the process of identifying a route through the town to link with the Speyside Way at its proposed terminus in Buckie.

T3 Sustrans Cycle Network

The Council is promoting the Moray section of the Sustrans National Cycle Network and will consequently safeguard the route.

ENVIRONMENT

The policies for the maintenance and enhancement of the environment are found in Chapter 2 (Environment).

The principal policies for the local environment are L/ENV10 'Settlement Boundaries' and L/ENV18 'Public Amenity and Open Spaces' in Chapter 2, and L/IMP1 'Development in Built Up Areas' in Chapter 8.

Under the terms of policy L/ENV18 (Public Amenity and Open Spaces) a number of spaces have been identified which contribute to the environment and amenity of the town. The purpose of policy L/ENV18 is to protect the integrity of these spaces from inappropriate development and to ensure that their contribution to the amenity of the built up area is not compromised.

ENV1 The Braes/Foreshore/Open Spaces

The following areas of open space will be protected:- The Braes (particularly from any form of enclosure); the Foreshore area; the area around the War Memorial, the natural ridges around the football pitch and school area and the small grassed area west of the harbour area.

There will, in addition be a presumption against any development which interferes with established pedestrian links.

ENV2 East Beach

The completion of the realignment of the sewage system from the east beach provides an opportunity for developing this area as a prime recreational and amenity feature, second only in importance to the harbour. No other new development will be permitted on the site south of the New Street access unless related to tourist, recreational or nature conservation objectives. Lightweight structures of a temporary nature (e.g. garages and storage sheds), will only be permitted on the site north of the New Street access road but must not compromise the overall recreational and amenity use of the shore.

ENV3 Morven Crescent Play Area (see also R4)

To be retained

ENV4 Football Pitch

To be retained

ENV5 School Banks

The gorse banks between the school and Netherton Steadings will be retained as a natural habitat in order to maintain green space in the town. Footpath access through the site is encouraged.

There are wider environmental designations relating to areas of local, national and international scientific importance and to areas of high scenic and landscape quality which in most cases may relate to areas just beyond the settlement boundary. Where sites of scientific importance are found within settlement boundaries, these are designated as ENV in the Proposals Map.

AGLV The coastline westwards to Portessie and eastwards to Portknockie is designated an Area of Great Landscape Value).

CPZ The coastal area east and west of the town boundary is designated as a Coastal Protection Zone.

SINS The foreshore to the east of the town has been designated a Site of Interest to Natural Science.

Detailed maps of all the above are held by The Moray Council.

Conservation Area

The governing local plan policy for development within Conservation Areas is L/ENV15 in Chapter 2. (Listed Buildings are controlled under policy L/ENV14).

The boundaries of the Outstanding Conservation Area have not changed as a result of the Local Plan review. (See detailed maps held in the Council Environmental Services Department offices). The Conservation Area will however be subject to monitoring.

HOUSING

The main governing local plan policy for new housing developments is L/H3 in Chapter 3 (Servicing and Layout of new Housing Developments). Policy L/H7 in Chapter 3 (Affordable Housing provision) may also apply pending on the size and location of the development.

R1 Reidhaven Crescent

A small site in Council ownership, which is suitable for approximately 8 new houses, in a similar size, layout and scale to those existing opposite to the north west.

R2 Former Secondary School Site, Craigview

This site would be suitable for high density general needs or a housing association development, complementing the adjoining scheme. Existing boundary walls will be retained. A sensitive frontage, which reflects the size, scale and layout of older houses, is required on to Craigview road.

R3 Netherton Farm

The remainder of the field to the south of the steadings development at Netherton Farm is designated for private housing development; access is gained via the Steadings road only. The southern and eastern boundaries of the development, adjoining the former railway embankment and main road, must be heavily landscaped. Public footpaths to the south and west must be made available. Careful consideration must also be given to the design of new development since this site will form part of a southern entrance to the town.

R4 Morven Crescent South

This large site is located between the rear of Morven Crescent and the main road to the south and is adjacent to a recently constructed children's play area. It is suitable for Housing Association development including provision of affordable housing (see L/H7). Phased release of the land may be appropriate so long as it is part of an agreed overall scheme. Access is taken from Morven Crescent at the north east corner of the site and traffic calming measures will be provided. A dyke along the southern boundary will be retained and provision will be made to allow residents of Morven Crescent parking access to the rear of their properties. Footpath links to the east, west and south will be necessary and significant proportions of soft landscaping are required, particularly to the west and south east (see policy L/H3(iii)). Careful consideration to design is necessary since the site is both edge of town and part of a town entrance.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT

There is no constraint imposed on development following the reorganisation of the town's sewerage system. Primary treatment, is required to be installed by the year 2005 but it is likely that the towns sewage will be pumped to Buckie when the latter's scheme is developed.

