

THE PLANNING BACKGROUND

Previous Local Plans identified Portknockie as in need of housing to revive its population structure. No Local Authority housing had been built since 1975, and all new housing had been in the form of detached bungalows at the extensive Haig Street development where some 2 houses per annum were being built. In 1989, 15 houses were built by the SSHA on the former Station site and the Council has since laid out 6 serviced house plots on the remainder of the site and further housing is now being developed to the south west. Both the tortuous access roads into the town over the old railway line have now been levelled and straightened. New development in Portknockie has also taken place as small scale gap or replacement buildings.

CHARACTER OF THE TOWN

The character of Portknockie is established by its cliff-top setting (near the site of a Pictish castle) and its remarkable harbour well below the town to the north west. Although a town of almost 1,300 inhabitants, Portknockie is a residential community with very few business premises. It is tightly contained, with orderly, residential streets of turn-of-the-century housing dating from Portknockie's prosperous fishing era, enclosing the old seatown Outstanding Conservation Area. The outer fringe of housing, both Council and private, contrasts noticeably with the traditional areas. There are very few amenity spaces in the town and very few areas in need of environmental upgrading. Despite the inherent attractiveness, Portknockie lacks facilities for tourists, opportunities for small business premises and an obvious central heart or focus to the town.

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To encourage the residential role of the town and create attractive new housing areas.
- (ii) To enable the formation of a more clearly defined central heart or focus for the town.
- (iii) To protect the unique setting and built heritage of the old town, especially its harbour.
- (iv) To promote the recreational and tourist possibilities of the village.

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 'Commuted Payments' in Chapter 7 may also apply.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

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

Established Business Areas (L/ED4)

I1 Patrol Road

The one small area of business premises in Portknockie is located upon reclaimed ground, in a somewhat conspicuous location, and its visual impact is high in an area which will become increasingly important as a tourist route. New industrial developments will be discouraged here and extensions to existing units must be sensitively designed.

The Harbour (L/T6)

HBR1 Harbour Area

In the long term interests of the village, the setting and character of the harbour must be preserved as a priority. It can continue to operate as both a working and leisure harbour but large-scale commercial activity is not now appropriate. Some scope for amenity improvement exists, particularly in relation to the paddling pool and the definition of boundaries around the few existing business sites. However, the harbour has most potential as a tourist attraction and a feasibility study will be considered as an initial stage with a view to environmental improvement. Footpath links to the town and braes must be maintained and upgraded as well as additional seating considered.

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 retained for holiday/tourist use and there will be a presumption against redevelopment for other purposes.

T2 National Cycle Network

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

T3 Coastal Footpath

The Council wishes to identify a route through the town to link with the Speyside Way extension (at its proposed terminus in Buckie) in order to promote tourism and access.

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 Shoreline and Braes

There will be a presumption against development in these areas.

ENV2 Addison Street

Retain as open amenity area.

ENV3 Playing Fields

Retain for recreational use.

ENV4 Victoria Place

This area requires upgrading to provide the town with a focal point and informal public area. Paving, some hardy planting, tourist signage and definition of parking areas requires attention. The existing buildings in this area should be upgraded to a high standard and could be used for amenity use (tea shop, museum etc. or rehabilitated for housing - see R4). Any proposals however, to alter and upgrade this area must have full community support and meet the criteria within policies L/ENV18 and L/ENV15.

ENV5 Former Railway Line Cutting

This area should be maintained and used as a pedestrian link or cycle track. Ground maintenance is required to improve the environmental quality.

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 coast extending east of Findochty and west of Cullen, approximately north of the old railway line, is designated outwith the town boundary.

CPZ The designated Coastal Protection Zone totally encloses the town.

SINS The coastline to both the east and west of Portknockie is designated a Site of Interest to Natural Science for geomorphological reasons.

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 Outstanding Conservation Area was extended in 1993 to include High Street, Seafield Street and Admiralty Street. The Conservation Area will be subject to ongoing 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 Firth View

Planning consent was granted in 1996 for the development of 13 houses. Access to the site is taken off Slack Road. The Consent required the provision of a children's play area fronting Firth View and incorporated planning conditions relating to the design of houses fronting the A942. Housing development is taking place on a plot by plot basis with approximately 6 houses constructed to date.

R2 King Edward Terrace

Small gap site, with consent already granted for one house.

R3 Seabraes

This site may be the final extension eastwards of the town. Buildings should respect the traditional forms of the old town and the exposure of the site. Traffic calming and footpath links to the shores will be required. A provision for affordable housing may be stipulated (see L/H7) although the whole site could also be made available for specialist housing (See L/H8). The Council will encourage the release of single plots, if appropriate. There will be a requirement for a 10m strip of whin to the eastern boundary.

R4 Victoria Place

Possibilities exist in this part of the Outstanding Conservation Area for rehabilitation and infill development with a mix of residential and commercial uses.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT

Although the existing sea outfalls are regarded as satisfactory, it is noted that the system is approaching capacity. Also, Portknockie, by the year 2005 will require treatment of its sewage prior to discharge to the sea. No site is as yet identified, but discussions are taking place with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and North of Scotland Water Authority with a view to pumping Portknockie's sewage to a new plant to be located at Buckie.

